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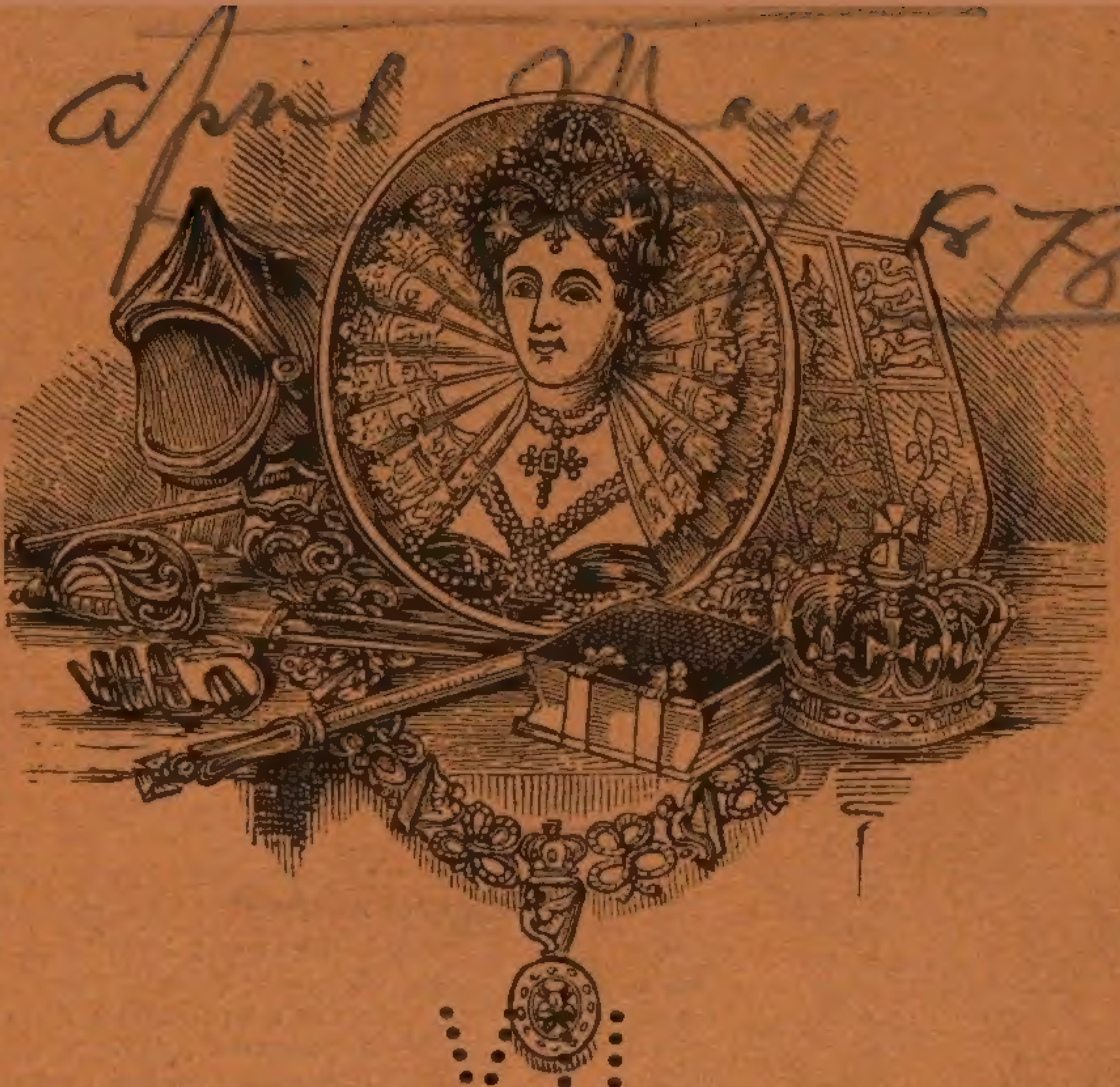
The Shorter Works of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu - The Purcell Papers



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Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (from the *Dublin University Magazine* unless noted otherwise)

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Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess 1838 (v12 Nov)
 as The Murdered Cousin 1851 (revised) *in* Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery
The Bridal of Carrigvarah 1839 (v13 Apr)
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 as Schalken the Painter 1851 (revised) in Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery
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THE GHOST AND THE BONE-SETTER.

In looking over the papers of my late valued and respected friend, Francis Purcell, who for nearly fifty years discharged the arduous duties of a parish priest in the south of Ireland, I met with the following document. It is one of many such, for he was a curious and industrious collector of old local traditions—a commodity in which the quarter where he resided mightily abounded. The collection and arrangement of such legends was, as long as I can remember him, his *hobby;* but I had never learned that his love of the marvellous and whimsical had carried him so far as to prompt him to commit the results of his enquiries to writing, until, in the character of *residuary legatee*, his will put me in possession of all his manuscript papers. To such as may think the composing of such productions as these inconsistent with the character and habits of a country priest, it is necessary to observe, that there did exist a race of priests—those of the old school, a race now nearly extinct—whose habits were from many causes more refined, and whose tastes more literary than are those of the alumni of Maynooth.

It is perhaps necessary to add that the superstition illustrated by the following story, namely, that the corpse last buried is obliged, during his juniority of interment, to supply his brother tenants of the church-yard in which he lies, with fresh water to allay the burning thirst of purgatory, is prevalent throughout the south of Ireland. The writer can vouch for a case in which a respectable and wealthy farmer, on the borders of Tipperary, in tenderness to the corns of his departed helpmate, enclosed in her coffin two pair of brogues, a light and a heavy, the one for dry, the other for sloppy weather; seeking thus to mitigate the fatigues of her inevitable perambulations in procuring water, and administering it to the thirsty souls of purgatory. Fierce and desperate conflicts have ensued in the case of two funeral parties approaching the same church-yard together, each endeavouring to secure to his own dead priority of sepulture, and a consequent immunity from the tax levied upon the pedestrain powers of the last comer. An instance not long since occurred, in which one of two such parties, through fear of losing to their deceased friend this inestimable advantage, made their way to the church-yard by a *short cut*, and in violation of one of their strongest prejudices, actually threw the coffin over the wall, lest time should be lost in making their entrance through the gate. Innumerable instances of the same kind might be quoted, all tending to shew how strongly, among the peasantry of the south, this superstition is entertained. However, I shall not detain the reader further, by any prefatory remarks, but shall proceed to lay before him the following:—

EXTRACT FROM THE MS. PAPERS OF THE LATE REV. FRANCIS PURCELL, OF DRUMCOOLAGH.

"I tell the following particulars, as nearly as I can recollect them, in the words of the narrator. It may be necessary to observe that he was what is termed a *well-spoken* man, having for a considerable time instructed the ingenious youth of his native parish in such of the liberal arts and sciences as he found it convenient to profess—a circumstance which may account for the occurrence of several big words, in the course of this narrative, more distinguished for euphonious effect, than for correctness of application. I proceed then, without further preface, to lay before you the wonderful adventures of Terry Neil."

"Why, thin, 'tis a quare story, an' as thrue as you're sittin' there; and I'd make bould to say there isn't a boy in the seven parishes could tell it better nor crickther than myself, for 'twas my father himself it happened to, an' manys the time I heerd it out iv his own mouth; an' I can say, an' I'm proud av that same, my father's word was as incredible as any squire's oath in the counthry; and so signs an' if a poor man got into any unlucky throuble, he was the boy id go into the court an' prove; but that dosen't signify—he was as honest and as sober a man, barrin' he was a little bit too partial to the glass, as you'd find in a day's walk; an' there wasn't the likes of him in the counthry round for nate labourin' an' *baan* diggin'; and he was mighty handy entirely for carpenther's work, and mendin' ould spudethrees, an' the likes i' that. An' so he tuck up with bone-setting, as was most nathural, for none of them could come up to him in mendin' the leg iv a stool or a table; an' sure, there never was a bone-setter got so much custom—man an' child, young an' ould—there never was such breakin' and mendin' of bones known in the memory of man. Well, Terry Neil, for that was my father's name, began to feel his heart growin' light, and his purse heavy; an' he took a bit iv a farm in Squire Phalim's ground, just undher the ould castle, an' a pleasant little spot it was; an' day an' mornin', poor crathurs not able to put a foot to the ground, with broken arms and broken legs, id be comin' ramblin' in from all quarters to have their bones spliced up. Well, yer honour, all this was as well as well could be; but it was customary when Sir Phelim id go any where out iv the country, for some iv the tinants to sit up to watch in the ould castle, just for a kind of a compliment to the ould family—an' a mighty unpleasant compliment it was for the tinants, for there wasn't a man of them but knew there was some thing quare about the ould castle. The neighbours had it, that the squire's ould grandfather, as good a gintleman, God be with him, as I heer'd, as ever stood in shoe leather, used to keep walkin' about in the middle iv the night, ever sinst he bursted a blood vessel pullin' out a cork out iv a bottle, as you or I might be doin', and will too, plase God; but that dosen't signify. So, as I was sayin', the ould squire used to come down out of the frame, where his picthur was hung up, and to brake the bottles and glasses, God be marciful to us all, an' dhrink all he could come at—an' small blame to him for that same; and then if any of the family id be comin' in, he id be up again in his place, looking as quite an' innocent as if he didn't know any thing about it—the mischievous ould chap.

"Well, your honour, as I was sayin', one time the family up at the castle was stayin' in Dublin for a week or two; and so as usual, some of the tenants had to sit up in the castle, and the third night it kem to my father's turn. 'Oh, tare an ouns,' says he unto himself, 'an' must I sit up all night, and that ould vagabond of a sperit, glory be to God,' says he, 'serenading through the house, an' doin' all sorts iv mischief.' However, there was no gettin' aff, and so he put a bould face on it, an' he went up at night-fall with a bottle of pottieen, and another of holy wather.

"It was rainin' smart enough, an' the evenin' was darksome and gloomy, when my father got in; and what with the rain he got, and the holy wather he sprinkled on himself, it wasn't long till he had to swallee a cup iv the pottieen, to keep the cowld out iv his heart. It was the ould steward, Lawrence Connor, that opened the door—and he an' my father wor always very great. So when he seen who it was, an' my father tould him how it was his turn to watch in the castle, he offered to sit up along with him; and you may be sure my father wasn't sorry for that same. So says Larry,

"'We'll have a bit iv fire in the parlour,' says he.

"'An' why not in the hall?' says my father, for he knew that the squire's picthur was hung in the parlour.

"'No fire can be lit in the hall,' says Lawrence, 'for there's an ould jackdaw's nest in the chimney.'

"'Oh thin,' says my father, 'let us stop in the kitchen, for it's very umproper for the likes iv me to be sittin' in the parlour,' says he.

"'Oh, Terry, that can't be,' says Lawrence; 'if we keep up the ould custom at all, we may as well keep it up properly,' says he.

"'Divil sweep the ould custom,' says my father—to himself, do ye mind, for he didn't like to let Lawrence see that he was more afeard himself.

"'Oh, very well,' says he. 'I'm agreeable, Lawrence,' says he; and so down they both went to the kitchen, until the fire id be lit in the parlour—an' that same wasn't long doin'.

"Well, your honour, they soon wint up again, an' sat down mighty comfortable by the parlour fire, and they beginn'd to talk, an' to smoke, an' to dhrink a small taste iv the pottieen; and, moreover, they had a good rousing fire of bogwood and turf, to warm their shins over.

"Well, sir, as I was sayin' they kep convarsin' and smokin' together most agreeable, until Lawrence beginn'd to get sleepy, as was but nathural for him, for he was an ould sarvint man, and was used to a great dale iv sleep.

"'Sure it's impossible,' says my father, 'it's gettin' sleepy you are?'

"'Oh, divil a taste,' says Larry, 'I'm

only shuttin' my eyes,' says he, 'to keep out the parfume of the tibacky smoke, that's makin' them wather,' says he. 'So don't you mind other people's business,' says he stiff enough, (for he had a mighty high stomach av his own, (rest his sowl,) and go on,' says he, 'with your story, for I'm listenin',' says he, shuttin' down his eyes.

"Well, when my father seen spakin' was no use, he went on with his story. —By the same token, it was the story of Jim Soolivan and his ould goat he was tellin'—an' a pleasant story it is—an' there was so much divarsion in it, that it was enough to waken a dormouse, let alone to pervint a Christian goin' asleep. But, faix, the way my father tould it, I believe there never was the likes heerd sinst nor before, for he bawled out every word av it, as if the life was fairly leavin' him, thrying to keep ould Larry awake; but, faix, it was no use, for the hoorsness came an him, an' before he kem to the end of his story, Larry O'Connor beginned to snore like a bagpipes.

"'Oh, blur an' agres,' says my father, 'isn't this a hard case,' says he, 'that ould villain, lettin' on to be my friend, and to go asleep this way, an' us both in the very room with a sperit,' says he. 'The crass o' Christ about us,' says he; and with that he was goin' to shake Lawrence to waken him, but he just remimbered if he roused him, that he'd surely go off to his bed, an' lave him complately alone, an' that id be by far worse.

"'Oh thin,' says my father, 'I'll not disturb the poor boy. It id be neither friendly nor good-nathured,' says he, 'to tormint him while he is asleep,' says he; 'only I wish I was the same way, myself,' says he.

"An' with that he beginned to walk up an' down, an' sayin' his prayers, until he worked himself into a sweat, savin' your presence. But it was all no good; so he dhrunk about a pint of sperits, to compose his mind.

"'Oh,' says he, 'I wish to the Lord I was as asy in my mind as Larry there. Maybe,' says he, 'if I thried I could go asleep;' an' with that he pulled a big arm-chair close beside Lawrence, an' settled himself in it as well as he could.

"But there was one quare thing I forgot to tell you. He couldn't help, in spite av himself, lookin' now an' thin at the picthur, an' he immediately observed that the eyes av it was follyin' him about, an' starin' at him, an' winkin' at him, wherever he wint. 'Oh,' says he, when he seen that, 'it's a poor chance I have,' says he; 'an' bad luck was with me the day I kem into this unforthunate place,' says he; 'but any way there's no use in bein' freckened now,' says he; 'for if I am to die, I may as well parspire undaunted,' says he.

"Well, your honour, he thried to keep himself quite an' asy, an' he thought two or three times he might have wint asleep, but for the way the storm was groanin' and creekin' through the great heavy branches outside, an' whistlin' through the ould chimnies iv the castle. Well, afther one great roarin' blast iv the wind, you'd think the walls iv the castle was just goin' to fall, quite an' clane, with the shakin' iv it. All av a suddint the storm stopt, as silent an' as quite as if it was a July evenin'. Well, your honour, it wasn't stopped blowin' for three minnites, before he thought he hard a sort iv a noise over the chimney-piece; an' with that my father just opened his eyes the smallest taste in life, an' sure enough he seen the ould squire gettin' out iv the picthur, for all the world as if he was throwin' aff his ridin' coat, until he stept out clane an' complate, out av the chimly-piece, an' thrun himself down an the floor. Well, the slieveen ould chap—an' my father thought it was the dirtiest turn iv all—before he beginned to do anything out iv the way, he stopped, for a while, to listen wor they both asleep; an' as soon as he thought all was quite, he put out his hand, and tuck hould iv the whiskey bottle, an' dhrank at laste a pint iv it. Well, your honour, when he tuck his turn out iv it, he settled it back mighty cute intirely, in the very same spot it was in before. An' he beginn'd to walk up an' down the room, lookin' as sober an' as solid as if he never done the likes at all. An' whinever he went apast my father, he thought he felt a great scent of brimstone, an' it was that that freckened him entirely; for he knew it was brimstone that was burned in hell, savin' your presence. At any rate, he often heer'd it from Father Murphy, an' he had a right to know what belonged to it—he's dead since, God rest him. Well, your honour, my father was asy enough until the sperit kem past him; so close, God be marciful to us all, that the smell iv the sulphur tuck the breath clane out iv him;

an' with that he tuck such a fit iv coughin', that it al-a-most shuck him out iv the chair he was sittin' in.

"'Ho, ho!' says the squire, stoppin' short about two steps aff, and turnin' round facin' my father, 'is it you that's in it?—an' how's all with you, Terry Neil?'

"'At your honour's sarvice,' says my father (as well as the fright id let him, for he was more dead than alive), 'an' it's proud I am to see your honour to-night,' says he.

"'Terence,' says the squire, 'you're a respectable man (an' it was thrue for him), an industhrious, sober man, an' an example of inebriety to the whole parish,' says he.

"'Thank your honour,' says my father, gettin' courage, 'you were always a civil spoken gintleman, God rest your honour.'

"'Rest my honour,' says the sperit (fairly gettin' red in the face with the madness), 'Rest my honour?' says he. 'Why, you ignorant spalpeen,' says he, 'you mane, niggarly ignoramush,' says he, 'where did you lave your manners?' says he. 'If I *am* dead, it's no fault iv mine,' says he; 'an' it's not to be thrun in my teeth at every hand's turn, by the likes iv you,' says he, stampin' his foot an the flure, that you'd think the boords id smash undher him.

"'Oh,' says my father, 'I'm only a foolish, ignorant, poor man,' says he.

"'You're nothing else,' says the squire; 'but any way,' says he, 'it's not to be listenin' to your gosther, nor convarsin' with the likes iv you, that I came *up*—down I mane,' says he,—(an' as little as the mistake was, my father tuck notice iv it). 'Listen to me now, Terence Neil,' says he, 'I was always a good masther to Pathrick Neil, your grandfather,' says he.

"''Tis thrue for your honour,' says my father.

"'And, moreover, I think I was always a sober, riglar gintleman,' says the squire.

"'That's your name, sure enough,' says my father (though it was a big lie for him, but he could not help it).

"'Well,' says the sperit, 'although I was as sober as most men—at laste as most gintlemen'—says he; 'an' though I was at different pariods a most extempory Christian, and most charitable and inhuman to the poor,' says he; 'for all that I'm not as asy where I am now,' says he, 'as I had a right to expect,' says he.

"'An' more's the pity,' says my father; 'maybe your honour id wish to have a word with Father Murphy?'

"'Hould your tongue, you misherable bliggard,' says the squire; 'it's not iv my sowl I'm thinkin'—an' I wondher you'd have the impitence to talk to a gintleman consarnin' his sowl;—and when I want *that* fixed,' says he, slappin' his thigh, 'I'll go to them that knows what belongs to the likes,' says he. 'It's not my sowl,' says he, sittin' down opposite my father; 'it's not my sowl that's annoyin' me most—I'm unasy on my right leg,' says he, 'that I bruck at Glenvarloch cover the day I killed black Barney.'

"(My father found out afther, it was a favourite horse that fell undher him, afther leapin' the big fince that runs along by the glen.)

"'I hope,' says my father, 'your honour's not unasy about the killin' iv him?

"'Hould your tongue, ye fool,' said the squire, 'an' I'll tell you why I'm anasy an my leg,' says he. 'In the place, where I spend most iv my time,' says he, 'except the little leisure I have for lookin' about me here,' says he, 'I have to walk a great dale more than I was ever used to,' says he, 'and by far more than is good for me either,' says he; 'for I must tell you,' says he, 'the people where I am is ancommonly fond iv could wather, for there is nothin' betther to be had; an', moreover, the weather is hotter than is altogether plisint,' says he; 'and I'm appinted,' says he, 'to assist in carryin' the wather, an' gets a mighty poor share iv it myself,' says he, 'an' a mighty throublesome, warin' job it is, I can tell you,' says he; 'for they're all iv them surprisingly dhry, an' dhrinks it as fast as my legs can carry it,' says he; 'but what kills me intirely,' says he, 'is the wakeness in my leg,' says he, 'an' I want you to give it a pull or two to bring it to shape,' says he, 'and that's the long an' the short iv it,' says he.

"'Oh, plase your honour,' says my father (for he didn't like to handle the sperit at all), 'I wouldn't have the impitence to do the likes to your honour,' says he; 'it's only to poor crathurs like myself I'd do it to,' says he.

"'None iv your blarney,' says the squire, 'here's my leg,' says he, cockin' it up to him, 'pull it for the bare life,' says he; 'an' if you don't, by the immortial powers I'll not lave a bone in your carcish I'll not powdher,' says he.

"When my father heerd that, he seen there was no use in purtendin', so he tuck hould iv the leg, an' he kep pullin' an' pullin', till the sweat, God bless us, beginned to pour down his face."

"'Pull, you divil,' says the squire.

"'At your sarvice, your honour,' says my father.

"'Pull harder,' says the squire.

"My father pulled like the divil.

"'I'll take a little sup,' says the squire, rachin' over his hand to the bottle, 'to keep up my courage,' says he, lettin' an to be very wake in himself intirely. But, as cute as he was, he was out here, for he tuck the wrong one. 'Here's to your good health, Terence,' says he, 'an' now pull like the very divil,' an' with that he lifted the bottle of holy wather, but it was hardly to his mouth, whin he let a screech out, you'd think the room id fairly split with it, an' made one chuck that sent the leg clane aff his body in my father's hands; down wint the squire over the table, an' bang wint my father half way across the room on his back, upon the flure. Whin he kem to himself the cheerful mornin' sun was shinin' through the windy shutthers, an' he was lying flat an his back, with the leg iv one of the great ould chairs pulled clane out iv the socket an' tight in his hand, pintin' up to the ceilin', an' ould Larry fast asleep, an' snorin' as loud as ever. My father wint that mornin' to Father Murphy, an' from that to the day of his death, he never neglected confission nor mass, an' what he tould was betther believed that he spake av it but seldom. An', as for the squire, that is the sperit, whether it was that he did not like his liquor, or by rason iv the loss iv his leg, he was never known to walk again."

THE FORTUNES OF SIR ROBERT ARDAGH;

BEING A SECOND EXTRACT FROM THE PAPERS OF THE LATE FATHER PURCELL.

> The earth hath bubbles as the water hath—
> And these are of them.

In the south of Ireland, and on the borders of the county of Limerick, there lies a district of two or three miles in length, which is rendered interesting by the fact that it is one of the very few spots throughout this country, in which some fragments of aboriginal wood have found a refuge. It has little or none of the lordly character of the American forests; for the axe has felled its oldest and its grandest trees; but in the close wood which survives, live all the wild and pleasing peculiarities of nature—its complete irregularity—its vistas, in whose perspective the quiet cattle are peacefully browsing—its refreshing glades, where the grey rocks arise from amid the nodding fern—the silvery shafts of the old birch trees—the knotted trunks of the hoary oak—the grotesque but graceful branches, which never shed their honours under the tyrant pruning hook—the soft green sward—the chequered light and shade—the wild luxuriant weeds—its lichen and its moss—all, all are beautiful alike in the green freshness of spring, or in the sadness and sear of autumn—their beauty is of that kind which makes the heart full with joy—appealing to the affections with a power which belongs to nature only. This wood runs up, from below the base, to the ridge of a long line of irregular hills, having perhaps in primitive times, formed but the skirting of some mighty forest which occupied the level below.

But now, alas, whither have we drifted?—whither has the tide of civilization borne us?—it has passed over a land unprepared for it—it has left nakedness behind it—we have lost our forests, but our marauders remain—we have destroyed all that is picturesque, while we have retained everything that is revolting in barbarism. Through the midst of this woodland, there runs a deep gulley or glen; where the stillness of the scene is broken in upon by the brawling of a mountain stream, which, however, in the winter season, swells into a rapid and formidable torrent.

There is one point at which the glen becomes extremely deep and narrow, the sides descend to the depth of some hundred feet, and are so steep as to be nearly perpendicular. The wild trees which have taken root in the crannies and chasms of the rock, have so intersected and entangled, that one can with difficulty catch a glimpse of the stream, which wheels, flashes, and foams below, as if exulting in the surrounding silence and solitude.

This spot was not unwisely chosen, as a point of no ordinary strength, for the erection of a massive square tower or keep, one side of which rises as if in continuation of the precipitous cliff on which it is based. Originally, the only mode of ingress was by a narrow portal, in the very wall which overtopped the precipice; opening upon a ledge of rock which afforded a precarious pathway, cautiously intersected, however, by a deep trench cut with great labour in the living rock; so that, in its original state, and before the introduction of artillery into the art of war, this tower might have been pronounced, and that not presumptuously, almost impregnable.

The progress of improvement, and the increasing security of the times had, however, tempted its successive proprietors, if not to adorn, at least to enlarge their premises, and at about the middle of the last century, when the castle was last inhabited, the original square tower formed but a small part of the edifice.

The castle, and a wide tract of the surrounding country had from time immemorial, belonged to a family, which, for distinctness, we shall call by the name of Ardagh; and, owing to the associations which, in Ireland, almost always attach to scenes which have long witnessed alike, the exercise of stern feudal authority, and of that savage hospitality which distinguished the good old times, this building has become the subject and the scene of many wild and extraordinary traditions. One of them I have been enabled, by a personal acquaintance with an eye-witness of the events, to trace to its origin;

and yet it is hard to say, whether the events which I am about to record, appear more strange or improbable, as seen through the distorting medium of tradition, or in the appalling dimness of uncertainty, which surrounds the reality.

Tradition says that, sometime in the last century, Sir Robert Ardagh, a young man, and the last heir of that family, went abroad and served in foreign armies, and that having acquired considerable honour and emolument, he settled at Castle Ardagh, the building we have just now attempted to describe. He was what the country people call a *dark* man; that is, he was considered morose, reserved, and ill-tempered; and as it was supposed from the utter solitude of his life, was upon no terms of cordiality with the other members of his family.

The only occasion upon which he broke through the solitary monotony of his life, was during the continuance of the racing season, and immediately subsequent to it; at which time he was to be seen among the busiest upon the course, betting deeply and unhesitatingly, and invariably with success. Sir Robert was, however, too well-known as a man of honour, and of too high a family to be suspected of any unfair dealing. He was, moreover, a soldier, and a man of an intrepid as well as of a haughty character, and no one cared to hazard a surmise, the consequences of which would be felt most probably by its originator only. Gossip, however, was not silent—it was remarked that Sir Robert never appeared at the race ground, which was the only place of public resort which he frequented, except in company with a certain strange looking person, who was never seen elsewhere, or under other circumstances. It was remarked, too, that this man, whose relation to Sir Robert was never distinctly ascertained, was the only person to whom he seemed to speak unnecessarily; it was observed, that while, with the country gentry he exchanged no further communication than what was unavoidable in arranging his sporting transactions, with this person he would converse earnestly and frequently. Tradition asserts, that to enhance the curiosity which this unaccountable and exclusive preference excited, the stranger possessed some striking and unpleasant peculiarities of person and of garb—she does not say, however, what these were—but they, in conjunction with Sir Robert's secluded habits, and extraordinary run of luck—a success which was supposed to result from the suggestions and immediate advice of the unknown—were sufficient to warrant report in pronouncing that there was something *queer* in the wind, and in surmising that Sir Robert was playing a fearful and a hazardous game, and that in short, his strange companion was little better than the devil himself.

Years, however, rolled quietly away, and nothing novel occurred in the arrangements of Castle Ardagh, excepting that Sir Robert parted with his odd companion, but as nobody could tell whence he came, so nobody could say whither he had gone. Sir Robert's habits, however, underwent no consequent change; he continued regularly to frequent the race meetings, without mixing at all in the convivialities of the gentry, and immediately afterwards to relapse into the secluded monotony of his ordinary life.

It was said that he had accumulated vast sums of money—and, as his bets were always successful, and always large, such must have been the case. He did not suffer the acquisition of wealth, however, to influence his hospitality or his housekeeping—he neither purchased land, nor extended his establishment; and his mode of enjoying his money must have been altogether that of the miser—consisting, merely, in the pleasure of touching and telling his gold, and in the consciousness of wealth. Sir Robert's temper, so far from improving, became more than ever gloomy and morose. He sometimes carried the indulgence of his evil dispositions to such a height, that it bordered upon insanity. During these paroxysms, he would neither eat, drink, nor sleep. On such occasions he insisted on perfect privacy, even from the intrusion of his most trusted servants;—his voice was frequently heard, sometimes in earnest supplication, sometimes raised as if in loud and angry altercation, with some unknown visitant—sometimes he would, for hours together, walk to and fro, throughout the long oak wainscotted apartment, which he generally occupied, with wild gesticulations and agitated pace, in the manner of one who has been roused to a state of unnatural excitement, by some sudden and appalling intimation.

These paroxysms of apparent lunacy were so frightful, that during their continuance, even his oldest and most faithful domestics dared not approach him; consequently, his hours of agony were never intruded upon, and the mysterious causes of his sufferings appeared likely to remain hidden for ever. On one occasion, a fit of this kind continued for an unusual time—the ordinary term of their duration, about two days, had been long past—and the old servant, who generally waited upon Sir Robert, after these visitations, having in vain listened for the well-known tinkle of his master's hand-bell, began to feel extremely anxious; he feared that his master might have died from sheer exhaustion, or perhaps put an end to his own existence, during his miserable depression. These fears at length became so strong, that having in vain urged some of his brother-servants to accompany him, he determined to go up alone, and himself see whether any accident had befallen Sir Robert. He traversed the several passages which conducted from the new to the more ancient parts of the mansion; and having arrived in the old hall of the castle, the utter silence of the hour, for it was very late in the night, the idea of the nature of the enterprise in which he was engaging himself, a sensation of remoteness from anything like human companionship, but more than all the vivid but undefined anticipation of something horrible, came upon him with such oppressive weight, that he hesitated as to whither he should proceed. Real uneasiness, however, respecting the fate of his master, for whom he felt that kind of attachment, which the force of habitual intercourse, not unfrequently engenders respecting objects not in themselves amiable—and also a latent unwillingness to expose his weakness to the ridicule of his fellow-servants, combined to overcome his reluctance; and he had just placed his foot upon the first step of the staircase, which conducted to his master's chamber, when his attention was arrested by a low but distinct knocking at the hall-door. Not, perhaps, very sorry at finding thus an excuse even for deferring his intended expedition, he placed the candle upon a stone block which lay in the hall, and approached the door, uncertain whether his ears had not deceived him. This doubt was justified by the circumstance, that the hall entrance had been for nearly fifty years disused as a mode of ingress to the castle. The situation of this gate also, which we have endeavoured to describe, opening upon a narrow ledge of rock which overhangs a perilous cliff, rendered it at all times, but particularly at night, a dangerous entrance; this shelving platform of rock, which formed the only avenue to the door, was divided, as I have already stated, by a broad chasm, the planks across which had long disappeared by decay or otherwise, so that it seemed at least highly improbable that any man could have found his way across the passage in safety to the door—more particularly, on a night like that, of singular darkness. The old man, therefore, listened attentively, to ascertain whether the first application should be followed by another; he had not long to wait; the same low but singularly distinct knocking was repeated; so low that it seemed as if the applicant had employed no harder or heavier instrument than his hand, and yet despite the immense thickness of the door, so very distinct, that he could not mistake the sound. It was repeated a third time, without any increase of loudness; and the old man obeying an impulse for which to his dying hour, he could never account, proceeded to remove, one by one, the three great oaken bars which secured the door. Time and damp had effectually corroded the iron chambers of the lock, so that it afforded little resistance. With some effort, as he believed, assisted from without, the old servant succeeded in opening the door; and a low, square-built figure, apparently that of a man wrapped in a large black cloak, entered the hall. The servant could not see much of this visitant with any distinctness; his dress appeared foreign, the skirt of his ample cloak was thrown over one shoulder; he wore a large felt hat, with a very heavy leaf, from under which escaped what appeared to be a mass of long sooty-black hair;—his feet were cased in heavy riding-boots. Such were the few particulars which the servant had time and light to observe. The stranger desired him to let his master know instantly that a friend had come, by appointment, to settle some business with him. The servant hesitated, but a slight motion on the part of his visitor, as if to possess himself of the candle, determined him; so taking it in his hand, he ascended the castle stairs, leaving his guest in the hall.

On reaching the apartment which opened upon the oak-chamber, he was surprised to observe the door of that room partly open, and the room itself lit up. He paused, but there was no sound—he looked in, and saw Sir Robert—his head, and the upper part of his body, reclining on a table, upon which burned a lamp; his arms were stretched forward on either side, and perfectly motionless; it appeared that having been sitting at the table, he had thus sunk forward, either dead or in a swoon. There was no sound of breathing; all was silent, except the sharp ticking of a watch, which lay beside the lamp. The servant coughed twice or thrice, but with no effect—his fears now almost amounted to certainty, and he was approaching the table on which his master partly lay—to satisfy himself of his death—when Sir Robert slowly raised his head, and throwing himself back in his chair, fixed his eyes in a ghastly and uncertain gaze upon his attendant. At length he said, slowly and painfully, as if he dreaded the answer—

"In God's name, what are you?"

"Sir," said the servant, "a strange gentleman wants to see you below."

At this intimation, Sir Robert, starting on his legs, and tossing his arms wildly upwards, uttered a shriek of such appalling and despairing terror, that it was almost too fearful for human endurance; and long after the sound had ceased, it seemed to the terrified imagination of the old servant, to roll through the deserted passages in bursts of unnatural laughter. After a few moments, Sir Robert said—

"Can't you send him away? Why does he come so soon? Oh God! oh God! let him leave me for an hour—a little time. I can't see him now—try to get him away. You see I can't go down now—I have not strength. Oh God! oh God! let him come back in an hour—it is not long to wait. He cannot lose any thing by it—nothing, nothing, nothing. Tell him that—say any thing to him."

The servant went down. In his own words, he did not feel the stairs under him, till he got to the hall. The figure stood exactly as he had left it. He delivered his master's message as coherently as he could. The stranger replied in a careless tone—

"If Sir Robert will not come down to me, I must go up to him."

The man returned, and to his surprise he found his master much more composed in manner. He listened to the message; and though the cold perspiration stood in drops upon his forehead, faster than he could wipe it away, his manner had lost the dreadful agitation which had marked it before. He rose feebly, and casting a last look of agony behind him, passed from the room to the lobby, where he signed to his attendant not to follow him. The man moved as far as the head of the staircase, from whence he had a tolerably distinct view of the hall, which was imperfectly lighted by the candle he had left there.

He saw his master reel, rather than walk down the stairs, clinging all the way to the banisters. He walked on as if about to sink every moment from weakness. The figure advanced as if to meet him, and in passing struck down the light. The servant could see no more; but there was a sound of struggling, renewed at intervals with silent but fearful energy. It was evident, however, that the parties were approaching the door, for he heard the solid oak sound twice or thrice, as the feet of the combatants, in shuffling hither and thither over the floor, struck upon it. After a slight pause he heard the door thrown open, with such violence that the leaf struck the sidewall of the hall, and it was so dark without that this was made known in no other way than by the sound. The struggle was renewed with an agony and intenseness of energy, that betrayed itself in deep-drawn gasps. One desperate effort, which terminated in the breaking of some part of the door, producing a sound as if the door-post was wrenched from its position, was followed by another wrestle, evidently upon the narrow ledge which ran outside the door, overtopping the precipice. This seemed as fruitless as the rest, for it was followed by a crashing sound as if some heavy body had fallen over, and was rushing down the precipice, through the light boughs that crossed near the top. All then became still as the grave, except the moan of the night wind that sighed up the wooded glen.

The old servant had not nerve to return through the hall, and to him that night seemed all but endless; but morning at length came, and with it the disclosure of the events of the night. Near the door, upon the ground, lay Sir Robert's sword-belt, which had given way in the scuffle. A huge splinter from the massive door-post had been wrenched off, by an almost superhuman effort—one which nothing but the gripe of a despairing man could have severed—and on the rock outside were left the marks of the slipping and sliding of feet.

At the foot of the precipice, not immediately under the castle, but dragged some way up the glen, were found the remains of Sir Robert, with hardly a vestige of a limb or feature left distinguishable. The right hand, however was uninjured, and in its fingers was clutched, with the fixedness of death, a long lock of coarse sooty hair—the only direct circumstantial evidence of the presence of a second person. So says tradition.

This story, as I have mentioned, was current among the dealers in such lore; but the original facts are so dissimilar in all but the name of the principal person mentioned, Sir Robert Ardagh, and the fact that his death was accompanied with circumstances of extraordinary mystery, that the two narratives are totally irreconcileable, (even allowing the utmost for the exaggerating influence of tradition,) except by supposing report to have combined and blended together the fabulous histories of several distinct heroes of the family of Ardagh. However this may be, I shall lay before the reader a distinct recital of the events from which the foregoing tradition arose. With respect to these there can be no mistake; they are authenticated as fully as any thing can be by human testimony; and I state them principally upon the evidence of a lady who herself bore a prominent part in the strange events which she related, and which I now record as being among the few well-attested tales of the marvellous, which it has been my fate to hear. I shall, as far as I am able, arrange in one combined narrative, the evidence of several distinct persons, who were eye-witnesses of what they related, and with the truth of whose testimony I am solemnly and deeply impressed.

Sir Robert Ardagh was the heir and representative of the family whose name he bore; but owing to the prodigality of his father, the estates descended to him in a very impaired condition. Urged by the restless spirit of youth, or more probably by a feeling of pride, which could not submit to witness, in the paternal mansion, what he considered a humiliating alteration in the style and hospitality which up to that time had distinguished his family, Sir Robert left Ireland and went abroad. How he occupied himself, or what countries he visited during his absence, was never known, nor did he afterwards make any allusion, or encourage any inquiries touching his foreign sojourn. He left Ireland in the year 1742, being then just of age, and was not heard of until the year 1760—about eighteen years afterwards—at which time he returned. His personal appearance was, as might have been expected, very greatly altered, more altered, indeed, than the time of his absence might have warranted one in supposing likely. But to counterbalance the unfavourable change which time had wrought in his form and features, he had acquired all the advantages of polish of manner, and refinement of taste, which foreign travel is supposed to bestow. But what was truly surprising was, that it soon became evident that Sir Robert was very wealthy—wealthy to an extraordinary and unaccountable degree; and this fact was made manifest, not only by his expensive style of living, but by his proceeding to disembarrass his property, and to purchase extensive estates in addition. Moreover, there could be nothing deceptive in these appearances, for he paid ready money for every thing, from the most important purchase to the most trifling.

Sir Robert was a remarkably agreeable man, and possessing the combined advantages of birth and property, he was, as a matter of course, gladly received into the highest society which the metropolis then commanded. It was thus that he became acquainted with the two beautiful Miss F——ds, then among the brightest ornaments of the highest circles of Dublin fashion. Their family was in more than one direction allied to nobility; and Lady D——, their elder sister by many years, and some time married to a once well-known nobleman, was now their protectress. These considerations, besides the fact that the young ladies were what is usually termed heiresses, though not to a very great amount, secured to them a high position in the best society which Ireland then produced. The two young ladies differed strongly, alike in appearance and in character. The elder of the two, Emily, was generally considered the handsomer—for her beauty was of that impressive kind which never failed to strike even at the first glance, possessing all the advantages of a fine person, and of a commanding carriage. The beauty of her features strikingly assorted in character with that of her figure and deportment. Her hair was raven black and richly luxuriant, beautifully contrasting with the even, perfect whiteness of her forehead—her finely pencilled brows were black as the ringlets that clustered near them—and her eyes, full, lustrous, and animated, possessed all the power and brilliancy of the black, with more than their softness and variety of expression. She was not, however, merely the tragedy queen. When she smiled, and that was not unfrequently, the dimpling of cheek and chin, the laughing display of the small and beautiful teeth—but more than all, the roguish archness of her deep, bright eye, shewed that nature had not neglected in her the lighter and the softer characteristics of woman.

Her younger sister Mary was, as I believe not unfrequently occurs in the case of sisters, quite in the opposite style of beauty. She was light-haired, had more colour, had nearly equal grace, with much more liveliness of manner. Her eyes were of that dark grey which poets so much admire—full of expression and vivacity. She was altogether a very beautiful and animated girl—though as unlike her sister as the presence of those two qualities would permit her to be. Their dissimilarity did not stop here—it was deeper than mere appearance—the character of their minds differed almost as strikingly as did their complexion. The fair-haired beauty had a large proportion of that softness and pliability of temper which physiognomists assign as the characteristics of such complexions. She was much more the creature of impulse than of feeling, and consequently more the victim of extrinsic circumstances than was her sister. Emily, on the contrary, possessed considerable firmness and decision. She was less excitable, but when excited, her feelings were more intense and enduring. She wanted much of the gaiety, but with it the volatility of her younger sister. Her opinions were adopted, and her friendships formed more reflectively, and her affections seemed to move, as it were, more slowly, but more determinedly. This firmness of character did not amount to any thing masculine, and did not at all impair the feminine grace of her manners.

Sir Robert Ardagh was for a long time apparently equally attentive to the two sisters, and many were the conjectures and the surmises as to which would be the lady of the choice at length, however, these doubts were determined; he proposed for and was accepted by the dark beauty, Emily T——d.

The bridals were celebrated in a manner becoming the wealth and connections of the parties; and Sir Robert and Lady Ardagh left Dublin to pass the honeymoon at the family mansion, Castle Ardagh, which had lately been fitted up in a style bordering upon magnificent. Whether in compliance with the wishes of his lady, or owing to some whim of his own, his habits were henceforward strikingly altered, and from having moved among the gayest if not the most profligate of the votaries of fashion, he suddenly settled down into a quiet, domestic, country gentleman, and seldom, if ever, visited the capital, and then his sojourns were brief as the nature of his business would permit.

Lady Ardagh, however, did not suffer from this change further than in being secluded from general society; for Sir Robert's wealth, and the hospitality which he had established in the family mansion, commanded that of such of his lady's friends and relatives as had leisure or inclination to visit the castle; and as the style of living was very handsome, and its internal resources of amusement considerable, few invitations from Sir Robert or his lady were neglected.

Many years passed quietly away, during which Sir Robert's and Lady Ardagh's hopes of issue were several times disappointed. In the lapse of all this time there occurred but one event worth recording. Sir Robert had brought with him from abroad a valet, who sometimes professed himself to be a Frenchman; at others an Italian; and at others again a German. He spoke all these languages with equal fluency, and seemed to take a kind of pleasure in puzzling the sagacity and balking the curiosity of such of the visitors at the castle as at any time happened to enter into conversation with him, or who, struck by his singularities, became inquisitive respecting his country and origin. Sir Robert called him by the French name, JACQUE; and among the lower orders he was familiarly known by the title of "Jack the devil," an appellation which originated in a supposed malignity of disposition, and a real reluctance to mix in the society of those who were believed to be his equals. This morose reserve, coupled with the mystery which enveloped all about him, rendered him an object of suspicion and inquiry to his fellow-servants, amongst whom it was whispered that this man in secret governed the actions of Sir Robert with a despotic dictation, and that as if to indemnify himself for his public and apparent servitude and self-denial, he in private exacted a degree of respectful homage from his so-called master, totally inconsistent with the relation generally supposed to exist between them.

This man's personal appearance was, to say the least of it, extremely odd; he was low in stature; and this defect was enhanced by a distortion of the spine, so considerable as almost to amount to a hunch; his features, too, had all that sharpness and sickliness of hue which generally accompany deformity; he wore his hair, which was black as soot, in heavy neglected ringlets about his shoulders, and always without powder—a peculiarity in those days. There was something unpleasant, too, in the circumstance that he never raised his eyes so as to meet those of another; this fact was often cited as a proof of his being SOMETHING NOT QUITE RIGHT, and said to result not from the timidity which is supposed in most cases to induce this habit, but from a consciousness that his eye possessed a power, which, if exhibited, would betray a supernatural origin. Once, and once only, had he violated this sinister observance: it was on the occasion of Sir Robert's hopes having been most bitterly disappointed; his lady, after a severe and dangerous confinement, gave birth to a dead child. Immediately after the intelligence had been made known, a servant, having upon some business, passed outside the gate of the castle yard, was met by Jacque, who, contrary to his wont, accosted him, observing, "so, after all the pother, the son and heir is still-born." This remark was accompanied by a chuckling laugh, only, the only approach to merriment which he was ever known to exhibit. The servant, who was really disappointed, having hoped for holy-day times, feasting and debauchery with impunity during the rejoicings which would have accompanied a christening, turned tartly upon the little valet, telling him that he should let Sir Robert know how he had received the tidings which should have filled any faithful servant with sorrow; and having once broken the ice, he was proceeding with increasing fluency, when his harangue was cut short and his temerity punished, by the little man's raising his head and treating him to a scowl so fearful, half demoniac, half insane, that it haunted his imagination in nightmares and nervous tremours for months after.

To this man Lady Ardagh had, at first sight, conceived an antipathy amounting to horror, a mixture of loathing and dread so very powerful that she had made it a particular and urgent request to Sir Robert, that he would dismiss him, offering herself, from that property which Sir Robert had, by the marriage settlements, left at her own disposal, to provide handsomely for him, provided only she might be relieved from the continual anxiety and discomfort which the fear of encountering him induced.

Sir Robert, however, would not hear of it; the request seemed at first to agitate and distress him; but when still urged in defiance of his peremptory refusal, he burst into a violent fit of fury; he spoke darkly of great sacrifices which he had made, and threatened that if the request were at any time renewed he would leave both her and the country for ever. This was, however, a solitary instance of violence; his general conduct towards Lady Ardagh, though at no time bordering upon the uxorious, was certainly kind and respectful, and he was more than repaid in the fervent attachment which she bore him in return.

Some short time after this strange interview between Sir Robert and Lady Ardagh; one night after the family had retired to bed, and when everything had been quiet for some time, the bell of Sir Robert's dressing-room rang suddenly and violently; the ringing was repeated again and again at still shorter intervals, and with increasing violence, as if the person who pulled the bell was agitated by the presence of some terrifying and imminent danger. A servant named Donovan was the first to answer it; he threw on his clothes, and hurried to the room with haste proportioned to the urgency of the call.

Sir Robert had selected for his private room an apartment, remote from the bed-chambers of the castle, most of which lay in the more modern parts of the mansion, and secured at its entrance by a double door; as the servant opened the first of these, Sir Robert's bell again sounded with a longer and louder peal; the inner door resisted his efforts to open it; but after a few violent struggles, not having been perfectly secured or owing to the inadequacy of the bolt itself, it gave way, and the servant rushed into the apartment, advancing several paces before he could recover himself. As he entered, he heard Sir Robert's voice exclaiming loudly "wait without, do not come in yet;" but the prohibition came too late. Near a low truckle-bed, upon which Sir Robert sometimes slept, for he was a whimsical man, in a large arm chair, sate, or rather lounged, the form of the valet, Jacque; his arms folded, and his heels stretched forward on the floor so as fully to exhibit his misshapen legs, his head thrown back, and his eyes fixed upon his master with a look of indescribable defiance and derision, while, as if to add to the strange insolence of his attitude and expression, he had placed upon his head the black cloth cap which it was his habit to wear.

Sir Robert was standing before him at the distance of several yards in a posture expressive of despair, terror, and what might be called an agony of humility. He waved his hand twice or thrice, as if to dismiss the servant, who, however, remained fixed on the spot where he had first stood; and then, as if forgetting every thing but the agony within him, he pressed his clenched hands on his cold damp brow, and dashed away the heavy drops that gathered chill and thickly there. Jacque broke the silence.

"Donovan," said he, "shake up that drone and drunkard, Carlton; tell him that his master directs that the travelling carriage shall be at the door within half an hour."

The servant paused as if in doubt as to what he should do; but his scruples were resolved by Sir Robert's saying hurriedly, "Go, go, do whatever he directs; his commands are mine, tell Carlton the same."

The servant hurried to obey, and in about half an hour the carriage was at the door, and Jacque having directed the coachman to drive to B——n, a small town at about the distance of twelve miles, the nearest point, however, at which post horses could be obtained, stept into the vehicle which accordingly quitted the castle immediately.

Although it was a fine moonlight night, the carriage made its way but slowly, and after the lapse of two hours, the travellers had arrived at a point about eight miles from the castle, at which the road strikes through a desolate and heathy flat, sloping up, distantly at either side into bleak undulatory hills, in whose monotonous sweep the imagination beholds the heaving of some dark sluggish sea, arrested in its first commotion by some preternatural power; it is a gloomy and divested spot; there is neither tree nor habitation near it; its monotony is unbroken, except by here and there the grey front of a rock peering above the heath, and the effect is rendered yet more dreary and spectral by the exaggerated and misty shadows which the moon casts along the sloping sides of the hills. When they had gained about the centre of this tract, Carlton, the coachman, was surprised to see a figure standing, at some distance in advance, immediately beside the road, and still more so when, on coming up, he observed that it was no other than the person whom he believed to be at that moment quietly seated in the carriage; the coachman drew up, and nodding to him, the little valet exclaimed, "Carlton, I have got the start of you, the roads are heavy, so I shall even take care of myself the rest of the way; do you make your way back as best you can; and I shall follow my own nose;" so saying he chucked a purse into the lap of the coachman, and turning off at a right angle with the road he began to move rapidly away in the direction of the dark ridge, that lowered in the distance. The servant watched him until he was lost in the shadowy haze of night; and neither he nor any of the inmates of the castle saw Jacque again. His disappearance, as might have been expected, did not cause any regret among the servants and dependants at the castle; and Lady Ardagh did not attempt to conceal her delight; but with Sir Robert matters were different; for, two or three days subsequent to this event, he confined himself to his room; and when he did return to his ordinary occupations, it was with a gloomy indifference which showed that he did so more from habit than from any interest he felt in them; he appeared from that moment unaccountably and strikingly changed, and thenceforward walked through life as a thing from which he could derive neither profit nor pleasure. His temper, however, so far from growing wayward or morose, became, though gloomy, very, almost unnaturally, placid and cold; but his spirits totally failed, and he became silent and abstracted.

These sombre habits of mind, as might have been anticipated, very materially affected the gay housekeeping of the castle; and the dark and melancholy spirit of its master, seemed to have communicated itself to the very domestics, almost to the very walls of the mansion. Several years rolled on in this way, and the sounds of mirth and wassail had long been strangers to the castle, when Sir Robert requested his lady, to her great astonishment, to invite some twenty or thirty of their friends to spend the Christmas, which was fast approaching, at the castle. Lady Ardagh gladly complied, and her sister Mary, who still continued unmarried, and Lady D—— were of course included in the invitations. Lady Ardagh had requested her sisters to set forward as early as possible, in order that she might enjoy a little of their society before the arrival of the other guests; and in compliance with this request they left Dublin almost immediately upon receiving the invitation, a little more than a week before the arrival of the festival which was to be the period at which the whole party were to muster.

For expedition's sake it was arranged that they should post, while Lady D—'s groom was to follow with her horses; she taking with herself her own maid and one male servant. They left the city when the day was considerably spent, and consequently made but three stages in the first day; upon the second, at about eight in the evening, they had reached the town of K——k, distant about fifteen miles from Castle Ardagh. Here owing to Miss F——d's great fatigue, she having been for a considerable time in a very delicate state of health, it was determined to put up for the night. They, accordingly, took possession of the best sitting room which the inn commanded, and Lady D—— remained in it to direct and urge the preparations for some refreshment, which the fatigues of the day had rendered necessary, while her younger sister retired to her bed-chamber to rest there for a little time, as the parlour commanded no such luxury as a sofa.

Miss F——d was, as I have already stated, at this time, in very delicate health; and upon this occasion the exhaustion of fatigue, and the dreary badness of the weather, combined to depress her spirits. Lady D—— had not been left long to herself, when the door communicating with the passage was abruptly opened, and her sister Mary entered in a state of great agitation; she sate down pale and trembling upon one of the chairs, and it was not until a copious flood of tears had relieved her, that she became sufficiently calm to relate the cause of her excitement and distress. It was simply this. Almost immediately upon lying down upon the bed she sank into a feverish and unrefreshing slumber; images of all grotesque shapes and startling colours flitted before her sleeping fancy with all the rapidity and variety of the changes in a kaleidoscope. At length, as she described it, a mist seemed to interpose itself between her sight and the ever-shifting scenery which sported before her imagination, and out of this cloudy shadow, gradually emerged a figure whose back seemed turned towards the sleeper; it was that of a lady, who, in perfect silence, was expressing as far as pantomimic gesture could, by wringing her hands, and throwing her head from side to side, in the manner of one who is exhausted by the over indulgence, by the very sickness and impatience of grief, the extremity of misery. For a long time she sought in vain to catch a glimpse of the face of the apparition, who thus seemed to stir and live before her. But at length the figure seemed to move with an air of authority, as if about to give directions to some inferior, and in doing so, it turned its head so as to display, with a ghastly distinctness, the features of Lady Ardagh, pale as death, with her dark hair all dishevelled, and her eyes dim and sunken with weeping. The revulsion of feeling which Miss F——d experienced at this disclosure—for up to that point she had contemplated the appearance rather with a sense of curiosity and of interest, than of any thing deeper—was so horrible, that the shock awoke her perfectly. She sat up in the bed, and looked fearfully around the room, which was imperfectly lighted by a single candle burning dimly, as if she almost expected to see the reality of her dreadful vision lurking in some corner of the chamber. Her fears were, however, verified, though not in the way she expected; yet in a manner sufficiently horrible—for she had hardly time to breathe and to collect her thoughts, when she heard, or thought she heard, the voice of her sister, Lady Ardagh, sometimes sobbing violently, and sometimes almost shrieking as if in terror, and calling upon her and Lady D——, with the most imploring earnestness of despair, for God's sake to lose no time in coming to her. All this was so horribly distinct, that it seemed as if the mourner was standing within a few yards of the spot where Miss F——d lay. She sprang from the bed, and leaving the candle in the room behind her, she made her way in the dark through the passage, the voice still following her, until as she arrived at the door of the sitting-room it seemed to die away in low sobbing.

As soon as Miss F——d was tolerably recovered, she declared her determination to proceed directly, and without further loss of time to Castle Ardagh. It was not without much difficulty that Lady D—— at length prevailed upon her to consent to remain where they then were, until morning should arrive, when it was to be expected that the young lady would be much refreshed by at least remaining quiet for the night, even though sleep were out of the question. Lady D—— was convinced, from the nervous and feverish symptoms which her sister exhibited, that she had already done too much, and was more than ever satisfied of the necessity of prosecuting the journey no further upon that day. After some time she persuaded her sister to return to her room, where she remained with her until she had gone to bed, and appeared comparatively composed. Lady D—— then returned to the parlour, and not finding herself sleepy, she remained sitting by the fire. Her solitude was a second time broken in upon, by the entrance of her sister, who now appeared, if possible, more agitated than before. She said that Lady D—— had not long left the room, when she was roused by a repetition of the same wailing and lamentations, accompanied by the wildest and most agonized supplications that no time should be lost in coming to Castle Ardagh, and all in her sister's voice, and uttered at the same proximity as before. This time the voice had followed her to the very door of the sitting room, and until she closed it, seemed to pour forth its cries and sobs at the very threshold.

Miss F——d now most positively declared that nothing should prevent her proceeding instantly to the castle, adding that if Lady D—— would not accompany her, she would go on by herself. Superstitious feelings are at all times more or less contagious, and the last century afforded a soil much more congenial to their growth than the present. Lady D—— was so far affected by her sister's terrors, that she became, at least, uneasy; and seeing that her sister was immoveably determined upon setting forward immediately, she consented to accompany her forthwith. After a slight delay, fresh horses were procured, and the two ladies and their attendants renewed their journey, with strong injunctions to the driver to quicken their rate of travelling as much as possible, and promises of reward in case of his doing so.

Roads were then in a much worse condition throughout the south, even than they now are; and the fifteen miles which modern posting would have passed in little more than an hour and a half, were not completed even with every possible exertion in twice the time. Miss F——d had been nervously restless during the journey. Her head had been out at the carriage window every minute; and as they approached the entrance to the castle demesne, which lay about a mile from the building, her anxiety began to communicate itself to her sister. The postillion had just dismounted, and was endeavouring to open the gate—at that time a necessary trouble; for in the middle of the last century, porter's lodges were not common in the south of Ireland, and locks and keys almost unknown. He had just succeeded in rolling back the heavy oaken gate, so as to admit the vehicle, when a mounted servant rode rapidly down the avenue, and drawing up at the carriage, asked of the postillion who the party were; and on hearing, he rode round to the carriage window, and handed in a note which Lady D—— received. By the assistance of one of the coach-lamps they succeeded in deciphering it. It was scrawled in great agitation, and ran thus—

"*My Dear Sister—my dear Sisters both,*—In God's name lose no time, I am frightened and miserable; I cannot explain all till you come. I am too much terrified to write coherently; but understand me—hasten—do not waste a minute. I am afraid you will come too late. E. A."

The servant could tell nothing more

than that the castle was in great confusion, and that Lady Ardagh had been crying bitterly all the night. Sir Robert was perfectly well. Altogether at a loss as to the cause of Lady Ardagh's great distress, they urged their way up the steep and broken avenue which winded through the crowding trees, whose wild and grotesque branches, now stript and naked by the blasts of winter, stretched drearily across the road. As the carriage drew up in the area before the door, the anxiety of the ladies almost amounted to sickness; and scarcely waiting for the assistance of their attendant, they sprang to the ground, and in an instant stood at the castle door. From within were distinctly audible the sounds of lamentation and weeping, and the suppressed hum of voices as if of those endeavouring to soothe the mourner. The door was speedily opened, and when the ladies entered, the first object which met their view was their sister, Lady Ardagh, sitting on a form in the hall, weeping and wringing her hands in deep agony. Beside her stood two old, withered crones, who were each endeavouring in their own way to administer consolation, without even knowing or caring what the subject of her grief might be.

Immediately on Lady Ardagh's seeing her sisters, she started up, fell on their necks, and kissed them again and again without speaking, and then taking them each by a hand, still weeping bitterly, she led them into a small room adjoining the hall, in which burned a light, and having closed the door, she sat down between them. After thanking them for the haste they had made, she proceeded to tell them, in words incoherent from agitation, that Sir Robert had in private, and in the most solemn manner, told her that he should die upon that night, and that he had occupied himself during the evening in giving minute directions respecting the arrangements of his funeral. Lady D—— here suggested the possibility of his labouring under the halucinations of a fever; but to this Lady Ardagh quickly replied,

"Oh! no, no! would to God I could think it. Oh! no, no! wait till you have seen him. There is a frightful calmness about all he says and does; and his directions are all so clear, and his mind so perfectly collected, it is impossible, quite impossible;" and she wept yet more bitterly.

At that moment Sir Robert's voice was heard in issuing some directions, as he came down stairs; and Lady Ardagh exclaimed, hurriedly—

"Go now and see him yourself; he is in the hall."

Lady D—— accordingly went out into the hall, where Sir Robert met her; and saluting her with kind politeness, he said, after a pause—

"You are come upon a melancholy mission—the house is in great confusion, and some of its inmates in considerable grief." He took her hand, and looking fixedly in her face, continued—"I shall not live to see tomorrow's sun shine."

"You are ill, sir, I have no doubt," replied she; "but I am very certain we shall see you much better to-morrow, and still better the day following."

"I am *not* ill, sister," replied he. Feel my temples, they are cool; lay your finger to my pulse, its throb is slow and temperate. I never was more perfectly in health, and yet do I know that ere three hours be past, I shall be no more."

"Sir, sir," said she, a good deal startled, but wishing to conceal the impression which the calm solemnity of his manner had, in her own despite, made upon her, "Sir, you should not jest; you should not even speak lightly upon such subjects. You trifle with what is sacred—you are sporting with the best affections of your wife——"

"Stay, my good lady," said he; "if when this clock shall strike the hour of three, I shall be anything but a helpless clod, then upbraid me. Pray return now to your sister. Lady Ardagh is, indeed, much to be pitied; but what is past cannot now be helped. I have now a few papers to arrange, and some to destroy. I shall see you and Lady Ardagh before my death; try to compose her—her sufferings distress me much; but what is past cannot now be mended."

Thus saying he went up stairs, and Lady D—— returned to the room where her sisters were sitting.

"Well," exclaimed Lady Ardagh, as she re-entered, "is it not so?—do you still doubt?—do you think there is any hope?"

Lady D—— was silent.

"Oh! none, none, none," continued she; "I see, I see you are convinced," and she wrung her hands in bitter agony.

"My dear sister," said Lady D——, "there is, no doubt, something strange in all that has appeared in this matter;

but still I cannot but hope that there may be something deceptive in all the apparent calmness of Sir Robert. I still must believe that some latent fever has affected his mind, as that owing to the state of nervous depression into which he has been sinking, some trivial occurrence has been converted, in his disordered imagination, into an augury foreboding his immediate dissolution."

In such suggestions, unsatisfactory even to those who originated them, and doubly so to her whom they were intended to comfort, more than two hours passed; and Lady D—— was beginning to hope that the fated term might elapse without the occurrence of any tragical event, when Sir Robert entered the room. On coming in, he placed his finger with a warning gesture upon his lips, as if to enjoin silence; and then having successively pressed the hands of his two sisters-in-law, he stooped over the almost lifeless form of his lady, and twice pressed her cold, pale forehead with his lips, and then passed motionlessly out of the room.

Lady D—— followed to the door, saw him take a candle in the hall, and walk deliberately up the stairs. Stimulated by a feeling of horrible curiosity, she continued to follow him at a distance. She saw him enter his own private room, and heard him close and lock the door after him. Continuing to follow him as far as she could, she placed herself at the door of the chamber, as noiselessly as possible; where after a little time, she was joined by her two sisters, Lady Ardagh and Miss F——d. In breathless silence they listened to what should pass within. They distinctly heard Sir Robert pacing up and down the room for some time; and then, after a pause, a sound as if some one had thrown himself heavily upon the bed. At this moment Lady D——, forgetting that the door had been secured within, turned the handle for the purpose of entering; some one from the inside, close to the door, said, "Hush! hush!" The same lady, now much alarmed, knocked violently at the door—there was no answer. She knocked again more violently, with no further success. Lady Ardagh, now uttering a piercing shriek, sank in a swoon upon the floor. Three or four servants, alarmed by the noise, now hurried up stairs, and Lady Ardagh was carried apparently lifeless to her own chamber. They then, after having knocked long and loudly in vain, applied themselves to forcing an entrance into Sir Robert's room. After resisting some violent efforts, the door at length gave way, and all entered the room nearly together. There was a single candle burning upon a table at the far end of the apartment; and stretched upon the bed lay Sir Robert Ardagh. He was a corpse—the eyes were open—no convulsion had passed over the features, or distorted the limbs—it seemed as if the soul had sped from the body without a struggle to remain there. On touching the body it was found to be cold as clay—all lingering of the vital heat had left it. They closed the ghastly eyes of the corpse, and leaving it to the care of those who seem to consider it a privilege of their age and sex to gloat over the revolting spectacle of death in all its stages, they returned to Lady Ardagh, now a widow. The party assembled at the castle, but the atmosphere was tainted with death. Grief there was not much, but awe and panic were expressed in every face. The guests talked in whispers, and the servants walked on tiptoe, as if afraid of the very noise of their own footsteps.

The funeral was conducted almost with splendour. The body having been conveyed, in compliance with Sir Robert's last directions, to Dublin, was there laid within the ancient walls of Saint Audoen's Church—where I have read the epitaph, telling the age and titles of the departed dust. Neither painted escutcheon, nor marble slab, have served to rescue from oblivion the story of the dead, whose very name will ere long moulder from their tracery—

"Et sunt sua fata sepulchris."*

The events which I have recorded are not imaginary. They are Facts; and there lives one whose authority none would venture to question, who could vindicate the accuracy of every statement which I have set down, and that, too, with all the circumstantiality of an eye witness.†

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* This prophesy has since been realised; for the aisle in which Sir Robert's remains were laid, has been suffered to fall completely to decay; and the tomb which marked his grave, and other monuments more curious, form now one indistinguishable mass of rubbish.

† This paper, from a memorandum, I find to have been written in 1803. The lady to whom allusion is made, I believe to be Miss Mary F——d. She never married, and survived both her sisters, living to a very advanced age.

THE LAST HEIR OF CASTLE CONNOR;

BEING A THIRD EXTRACT FROM THE LEGACY OF THE LATE FRANCIS PURCELL, P.P. OF DRUMCOOLAGH.

THERE is something in the decay of ancient grandeur to interest even the most unconcerned spectator—the evidences of greatness, of power, and of pride that survive the wreck of time, proving, in mournful contrast with present desolation and decay, what *was* in other days, appeal, with a resistless power, to the sympathies of our nature. And when, as we gaze on the scion of some ruined family, the first impulse of nature that bids us regard his fate with interest and respect, is justified by the recollection of great exertions and self-devotion and sacrifices in the cause of a lost country and of a despised religion—sacrifices and efforts made with all the motives of faithfulness and of honour, and terminating in ruin—in such a case respect becomes veneration, and the interest we feel amounts almost to a passion. It is this feeling which has thrown the magic veil of romance over every roofless castle and ruined turret throughout our country—it is this feeling, that so long as a tower remains above the level of the soil, so long as one scion of a prostrate and impoverished family survives, will never suffer Ireland to yield to the stranger more than the "mouth honour," which fear compels.* I who have conversed *viva voce et propria persona* with those whose recollections could run back so far as the times previous to the confiscations which followed the Revolution of 1688—whose memory could repeople halls long roofless and desolate, and point out the places where greatness once had been, may feel all this more strongly, and with a more vivid interest, than can those whose sympathies are awakened by the feebler influence of what may be called the *picturesque* effects of ruin and decay.

There do, indeed, still exist some fragments of the ancient Catholic families of Ireland; but, alas! what *very* fragments. They linger like the remnants of her aboriginal forests, reft indeed of their strength and greatness, but proud even in decay. Every winter thins their ranks, and strews the ground with the wreck of their loftiest branches: they are at best but tolerated in the land which gave them birth—objects of curiosity, perhaps of pity, to one class, but of veneration to another. The O'Connors, of Castle Connor, were an ancient Irish family. The name recurs frequently in our history, and is generally to be found in a prominent place whenever periods of tumult or of peril called forth the courage and the enterprise of this country. After the accession of William the Third, the storm of confiscation which swept over the land made woeful havoc in their broad domains. Some fragments of property, however, did remain to them, and with it the building which had for ages formed the family residence. About the year 17—, my uncle, a Catholic priest, became acquainted with the inmates of Castle Connor, and after a time introduced me, then a lad of about 15, full of spirits, and little dreaming that a profession so grave as his should ever become mine. The family at that time consisted of but two members, a widow lady and her only son, a young man aged about eighteen. In our early days the progress from acquaintance to intimacy, and from intimacy to friendship is proverbially rapid; and young O'Connor and I became, in less than a month, close and confidential companions—an intercourse which ripened gradually into in attachment ardent, deep and devoted—such as I believe young hearts only are capable of forming. He had been left early an orphan, and the representative and heir of his family. His mother's affection for him was intense in proportion as there existed no other object to divide it—indeed such love as that she bore him I have never seen elsewhere. Her love was better bestowed than that of mothers generally is, for young O'Connor, not without some of the faults, had certainly many of the most engaging qualities of youth. He had all the frankness and gaiety which attract, and the generosity of heart which confirms friendship: indeed I never saw a person so universally popular; his very faults seemed to recommend him; he was wild, extravagant, thoughtless, and fearlessly adventurous—defects of character which, among the peasantry of Ireland, are honoured as virtues. The combination of these qualities, and the position which O'Connor occupied, as representative of an ancient Irish Catholic family—a peculiarly interesting one to me, one of the old faith—endeared him to me so much, that I have never felt the pangs of parting more keenly than when it became necessary, for the finishing of his education, that he should go abroad. Three years had passed away before I saw him again. During the interval, however, I had frequently heard from him, so that absence had not abated the warmth of our attachment. Who could tell of the rejoicings that marked the evening of his return? The horses were removed from the chaise at the distance of a mile from the castle, while it and its contents were borne rapidly onward almost by the pressure of the multitude, like a log upon a torrent. Bonfires blazed far and near—bagpipes roared and fiddles squeaked; and, amid the thundering shouts of thousands, the carriage drew up before the castle. In an instant young O'Connor was upon the ground, crying, "Thank you, boys, thank you, boys;" while a thousand hands were stretched out from all sides to grasp even a finger of his. Still, amid shouts of "God bless your honour, long may you reign," and "make room there, boys, clear the road for the masther," he reached the threshold of the castle, where stood his mother weeping for joy. Oh! who could describe that embrace, or the enthusiasm with which it was witnessed? "God bless him to you, my lady, glory to ye both," and "Oh but he is a fine young gentleman, God bless him," resounded on all sides, while hats flew up in volleys that darkened the moon; and when at length, amid the broad delighted grins of the thronging domestics, whose sense of decorum precluded any more boisterous evidence of joy, they reached the parlour, then giving way to the fulness of her joy the widowed mother kissed and blessed him and wept in turn. Well might any parent be proud to claim as son the handsome stripling who now represented the Castle Connor family; but to her his beauty had a peculiar charm, for it bore a striking resemblance to that of her husband, the last O'Connor. I know not whether partiality blinded me, or that I did no more than justice to my friend in believing that I had never seen so handsome a young man. I am inclined to think the latter. He was rather tall, very slightly and elegantly made; his face was oval, and his features decidedly *Spainish* in cast and complexion, but with far more vivacity of expression than generally belongs to the beauty of that nation. The extreme delicacy of his features and the varied animation of his countenance made him appear even younger than his years—an illusion which the total absence of everything studied in his manners seemed to confirm. Time had wrought no small change in me, alike in mind and spirits, but in the case of O'Connor it seemed to have lost its power to alter. His gaiety was undamped, his generosity unchilled; and though the space which had intervened between our parting and reunion was but brief, yet at the period of life at which we were, even a shorter interval than that of three years has frequently served to form or to *de*form a character. Weeks had passed away since the return of O'Connor, and scarce a day had elapsed without my seeing him, when the neighbourhood was thrown into an unusual state of excitement by the announcement of a race-ball to be celebrated at the *assembly-room* of the town of T——, distant scarcely two miles from Castle Connor. Young O'Connor, as I had expected, determined at once to attend it; and having directed in vain all the powers of his rhetoric to persuade his mother to accompany him, he turned the whole battery of his logic upon me, who, at that time, felt a reluctance stronger than that of mere apathy to mixing in any of those scenes of noisy pleasure for which for many reasons I felt myself unfitted. He was so urgent and persevering, however, that I could not refuse, and I found myself reluctantly obliged to make up my mind to attend him upon the important night to the spacious but ill-finished building, which the fashion and beauty of the county were pleased to term an *assembly-room*. When we entered the apartment, we found a select few, surrounded by a crowd of spectators, busily performing a minuet, with all the congées and flourishes which belonged to that courtly dance; and my companion, infected by the contagion of example, was soon, as I had anticipated, waving his *chapeau bras*, and gracefully bowing before one of the prettiest girls in the room. I had neither skill nor spirits to qualify me to follow his example; and as the fulness of the room rendered it easy to do so without its appearing singular, I determined to be merely a spectator of the scene which surrounded me, without taking an active part in its amusements. The room was indeed very much crowded, so that its various groups, formed as design or accident had thrown the parties together, afforded no small fund of entertainment to the contemplative observer. There were the dancers, all gaiety and good humour; a little further off, were the tables at which sat the card-players, some plying their vocation with deep and silent anxiety—for in those days gaming often ran very high in such places—and others disputing with all the vociferous pertinacity of undisguised ill-temper. There, again, were the sallow, blue-nosed, grey-eyed dealers in whispered scandal; and, in short, there is scarcely a group or combination to be met with in the court of kings which might not have found an humble parallel in the assembly-room of T——. I was allowed to indulge in undisturbed contemplation, for I suppose I was not known to more than five or six in the room. I thus had leisure not only to observe the different classes into which the company had divided itself, but to amuse myself by speculating as to the rank and character of many of the individual actors in the drama. Among many who have long since passed from my memory, one person for some time engaged my attention, and that person, for many reasons, I shall not soon forget. He was a tall, square-shouldered man, who stood in a careless attitude, leaning with his back to the wall; he seemed to have secluded himself from the busy multitudes which moved noisily and gaily around him, and nobody seemed to observe or to converse with him. He was fashionably dressed, but perhaps rather extravagantly; his face was full and heavy, expressive of sullenness and stupidity, and marked with the lines of strong vulgarity; his age might be somewhere between forty and fifty. Such as I have endeavoured to describe him, he remained motionless, his arms doggedly folded across his broad chest, and turning his sullen eyes from corner to corner of the room, as if eager to detect some object on which to vent his ill humour. It is strange, and yet it is true, that one sometimes finds even in the most common-place countenance an undefinable something, which fascinates the attention, and forces it to recur again and again, while it is impossible to tell whether the peculiarity which thus attracts us lies in feature or in expression, or in both combined, and why it is that our observation should be engrossed by an object which, when analysed, seems to possess no claim to interest or even to notice. This unaccountable feeling I have often experienced, and I believe I am not singular, but never in so remarkable a degree as upon this occasion. My friend O'Connor, having disposed of his fair partner, was crossing the room for the purpose of joining me, in doing which I was surprised to see him exchange a familiar, almost a cordial greeting with the object of my curiosity. I say I was surprised, for independent of his very questionable appearance, it struck me as strange that though so constantly associated with O'Connor, and, as I thought, personally acquainted with all his intimates, I had never before even seen this individual. I did not fail immediately to ask him who this gentleman was. I thought he seemed slightly embarrassed, but after a moment's pause he laughingly said that his friend over the way was too mysterious a personage to have his name announced in so giddy a scene as the present; but that on the morrow he would furnish me with all the information which I could desire. There was, I thought, in his affected jocularity a real awkwardness which appeared to me unaccountable, and consequently increased my curiosity; its gratification, however, I was obliged to defer. At length, wearied with witnessing amusements in which I could not sympathise, I left the room, and did not see O'Connor until late in the next day.

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* This passage serves (*mirabile dictu*) to corroborate a statement of Mr. O'Connell's, which occurs in his evidence given before the House of Commons, wherein he affirms that the principles of the Irish priesthood "*are* democratic, and were those of Jacobinism."—*See digest of the evidence upon the state of Ireland, given before the House of Commons.*

I had ridden down towards the castle for the purpose of visiting the O'Connors, and had nearly reached the avenue leading to the mansion, when I met my friend. He was also mounted; and having answered my enquiries respecting his mother, he easily persuaded me to accompany him in his ramble. We had chatted as usual for some time, when, after a pause, O'Connor said—

"By the way, Purcell, you expressed some curiosity respecting the tall, handsome fellow to whom I spoke last night."

"I certainly did question you about a *tall* gentleman, but was not aware of his claims to beauty," replied I.

"Well, that is, as it may be," said he; "the ladies think him handsome, and their opinion upon that score is more valuable than yours or mine. Do you know," he continued, "I sometimes feel half sorry that I ever made the fellow's acquaintance: he is quite a marked man here, and they tell stories of him that are anything but reputable, though I am sure without foundation. I think I know enough about him to warrant me in saying so."

"May I ask his name?" enquired I.

"Oh! did not I tell you his name?" rejoined he. "You should have heard that first; he and his name are equally well known. You will recognise the individual at once when I tell you that his name is—Fitzgerald."

"Fitzgerald!" I repeated. "Fitzgerald!—can it be Fitzgerald the duellist?"

"Upon my word you have hit it," replied he, laughing; "but you have accompanied the discovery with a look of horror more tragic than appropriate. He is not the monster you take him for—he has a good deal of old Irish pride; his temper is hasty, and he has been unfortunately thrown in the way of men who have not made allowance for these things. I am convinced that in every case in which Fitzgerald has fought, if the truth could be discovered, he would be found to have acted throughout upon the defensive. No man is mad enough to risk his own life, except when the doing so is an alternative to submitting tamely to what he considers an insult. I am certain that no man ever engaged in a duel under the consciousness that he had acted an intentionally aggressive part."

"When did you make his acquaintance?" said I.

"About two years ago," he replied. "I met him in France, and you know when one is abroad it is an ungracious task to reject the advances of one's countryman, otherwise I think I should have avoided his society—less upon my own account than because I am sure the acquaintance would be a source of continual though groundless uneasiness to my mother. I know, therefore, that you will not unnecessarily mention its existence to her."

I gave him the desired assurance, and added—

"May I ask you, O'Connor, if, indeed, it be a fair question, whether this Fitzgerald at any time attempted to engage you in anything like gaming?"

This question was suggested by my having frequently heard Fitzgerald mentioned as a noted gambler, and sometimes even as a *blackleg*. O'Connor seemed, I thought, slightly embarrassed. He answered—

"No, no—I cannot say that he ever attempted anything of the kind. I certainly have played with him, but never lost to any serious amount; nor can I recollect that he ever solicited me; indeed he knows that I have a strong objection to deep play. *You* must be aware that my finances could not bear much pruning down. I never lost more to him at a sitting than about five pounds, which you know is nothing. No, you wrong him if you imagine that he attached himself to me merely for the sake of such contemptible winnings as those which a broken-down Irish gentleman could afford him. Come, Purcell, you are too hard upon him, you judge only by report; you must see him, and decide for yourself.—Suppose we call upon him now; he is at the inn, in the high street, not a mile off."

I declined the proposal drily.

"Your caution is too easily alarmed," said he. "I do not wish you to make this man your bosom friend: I merely desire that you should see and speak to him, and if you form any acquaintance with him, it must be of that slight nature which can be dropped or continued at pleasure."

From the time that O'Connor had announced the fact that his friend was no other than the notorious Fitzgerald, a foreboding of something calamitous had come upon me, and it now occurred to me, that if any unpleasantness were to be feared as likely to result to O'Connor from their connexion, I might find my attempts to extricate him much facilitated by my being acquainted, however slightly, with Fitzgerald. I know not whether the idea was reasonable; it was certainly natural; and I told O'Connor that upon second thoughts I would ride down with him to the town, and wait upon Mr. Fitzgerald.

We found him at home, and chatted with him for a considerable time. To my surprise his manners were perfectly those of a gentleman, and his conversation, if not peculiarly engaging, was certainly amusing. The politeness of his demeanour, and the easy fluency with which he told his stories and his anecdotes, many of them curious, and all more or less entertaining, accounted to my mind at once for the facility with which he had improved his acquaintance with O'Connor; and when he pressed upon us an invitation to sup with him that night, I had almost joined O'Connor in accepting it. I determined, however, against doing so, for I had no wish to be on terms of familiarity with Mr. Fitzgerald; and I knew that one evening spent together as he proposed would go further towards establishing an intimacy between us than fifty morning visits could do. When I arose to depart, it was with feelings almost favourable to Fitzgerald; indeed I was more than half ashamed to acknowledge to my companion how complete a revolution in my opinion respecting his friend half an hour's conversation with him had wrought. His appearance certainly *was* against him; but then, under the influence of his manner, one lost sight of much of its ungainliness, and of nearly all its vulgarity; and, on the whole, I felt convinced that report had done him grievous wrong, inasmuch as anybody, by an observance of the common courtesies of society, might easily avoid coming into personal collision with a gentleman so studiously polite as Fitzgerald. At parting, O'Connor requested me to call upon him the next day, as he intended to make trial of the merits of a pair of greyhounds, which he had thoughts of purchasing, adding, that if he could escape in any thing like tolerable time from Fitzgerald's supper party, he would take the field soon after ten on the next morning. At the appointed hour, or, perhaps, a little later, I dismounted at Castle Connor; and, on entering the hall, I observed a gentleman issuing from O'Connor's private room. I recognised him, as he approached, as a Mr. M'Donough, and, being but slightly acquainted with him, was about to pass him with a bow, when he stopped me. There was something in his manner which struck me as odd; he seemed a good deal flurried, if not agitated, and said, in a hurried tone—

"This is a very foolish business, Mr. Purcell. You have some influence with my friend, O'Connor; I hope you can induce him to adopt some more moderate line of conduct than that he has decided upon. If you will allow me, I will return for a moment with you, and talk over the matter again with O'Connor."

As M'Donough uttered these words, I felt that sudden sinking of the heart which accompanies the immediate anticipation of something dreaded and dreadful. I was instantly convinced that O'Connor had quarrelled with Fitzgerald, and I knew that if such were the case, nothing short of miracle could extricate him from the consequences. I signed to M'Donough to lead the way, and we entered the little study together. O'Connor was standing with his back to the fire; on the table lay the breakfast things in the disorder in which a hurried meal had left them; and on another smaller table, placed near the hearth, lay pen, ink and paper. As soon as O'Connor saw me, he came forward and shook me cordially by the hand.

"My dear Purcell," said he, "you are the very man I wanted; I have got into an ugly scrape, and I trust to my friends to get me out of it."

"You have had no dispute with that man—that Fitzgerald, I hope," said I, giving utterance to the conjecture whose truth I most dreaded.

"Faith, I cannot say exactly what passed between us," said he, "inasmuch as I was at the time nearly half seas over; but of this much I am certain, that we exchanged angry words last night. I lost my temper most confoundedly; but, as well as I can recollect, he appeared perfectly cool and collected. What he said was, therefore, deliberately said, and on that account must be resented."

"My dear O'Connor, are you mad?" I exclaimed. "Why will you seek to drive to a deadly issue a few hasty words, uttered under the influence of wine, and forgotten almost as uttered? A quarrel with Fitzgerald, it is twenty chances to one, would terminate fatally to you."

"It is exactly because Fitzgerald *is* such an accomplished shot," said he, "that I become liable to the most injurious and intolerable suspicions if I submit to anything from him which could be construed into an affront; and for that reason Fitzgerald is the very last man to whom I would concede an inch in a case of honour."

"I do not require you to make any, the slightest, sacrifice of what you term your honour," I replied; "but if you have actually written a challenge to Fitzgerald, as I suspect you have done, I conjure you to reconsider the matter before you dispatch it. From all that I have heard you say, Fitzgerald has more to complain of in the altercation which has taken place than you. You owe it to your only surviving parent not to thrust yourself thus wantonly upon—I will say it, the most appalling danger. Nobody, my dear O'Connor, can have a doubt of your courage; and if at any time, which, God forbid, you shall be called upon thus to risk your life, you should have it in your power to enter the field under the consciousness that you have acted throughout temperately and like a man, and not, as I fear you now would do, having rashly and most causelessly endangered your own life and that of your friend."

"I believe, Purcell, you are right," said he. "I believe I *have* viewed the matter in too decided a light; my note, I think, scarcely allows him an honourable alternative, and that is certainly going a step too far—further than I intended. Mr. M'Donough, I'll thank you to hand me the note."

He broke the seal, and, casting his eye hastily over it, he continued—

"It is, indeed, a monument of folly. I am very glad, Purcell, you happened to come in, otherwise it would have reached its destination by this time."

He threw it into the fire; and, after a moment's pause, resumed—

"You must not mistake me, however. I am perfectly satisfied as to the propriety, nay, the necessity, of communicating with Fitzgerald. The difficulty is, in what tone I should address him. I cannot say that the man directly affronted me—I cannot recollect any one expression which I could lay hold upon as offensive—but his language was ambiguous, and admitted frequently of the most insulting construction, and his manner throughout was insupportably domineering. I know it impressed me with the idea that he presumed upon his reputation as a *dead shot*, and that would be utterly unendurable."

"I would now recommend, as I have already done," said M'Donough, "that if you write to Fitzgerald, it should be in such a strain as to leave him at perfect liberty, without a compromise of honour, in a friendly way, to satisfy your doubts as to his conduct."

I seconded the proposal warmly, and O'Connor, in a few minutes, finished a note, which he desired us to read. It was to this effect:—

"O'Connor, of Castle Connor, feeling that some expressions employed by Mr. Fitzgerald upon last night, admitted of a construction offensive to him, and injurious to his character, requests to know whether Mr. Fitzgerald intended to convey such a meaning?

"Castle Connor, Thursday morning."

This note was consigned to the care of Mr. M'Donough, who forthwith departed to execute his mission. The sound of his horse's hoofs, as he rode rapidly away, struck heavily at my heart; but I found some satisfaction in the reflection that M'Donough appeared as averse to extreme measures as I was myself, for I well knew, with respect to the final result of the affair, that as much depended upon the tone adopted by the *second*, as upon the nature of the written communication.

I have seldom passed a more anxious hour than that which intervened between the departure and the return of that gentleman. Every instant I imagined I heard the tramp of a horse approaching, and every time that a door opened I fancied it was to give entrance to the eagerly expected courier. At length I did hear the hollow and rapid tread of a horse's hoof upon the avenue. It approached—it stopped—a hurried step traversed the hall—the room door opened, and M'Donough entered.

"You have made great haste," said O'Connor; "did you find him at home?"

"I did," replied M'Donough, "and made the greater haste as Fitzgerald did not let me know the contents of his reply."

At the same time he handed a note to O'Connor, who instantly broke the seal. The words were as follow:—

"Mr Fitzgerald regrets that any thing which has fallen from him should have appeared to Mr. O'Connor to be intended to convey a reflection upon his honour, (none such having been meant,) and begs leave to disavow any wish to quarrel unnecessarily with Mr. O'Connor.

"T—— Inn, Thursday morning."

I cannot describe how much I felt relieved on reading the above communication. I took O'Connor's hand and pressed it warmly, but my emotions were deeper and stronger than I cared to shew, for I was convinced that he had escaped a most imminent danger. Nobody whose notions upon the subject are derived from the duelling of modern times, in which matters are conducted without any very sanguinary determination upon either side, and with equal want of skill and coolness by both parties, can form a just estimate of the danger incurred by one who ventured to encounter a duellist of the old school. Perfect coolness in the field, and a steadiness and accuracy (which to the unpractised appeared almost miraculous) in the use of the pistol, formed the characteristics of this class ; and in addition to this there generally existed a kind of professional pride, which prompted the duellist, in default of any more malignant feeling, from motives of mere vanity, to seek the life of his antagonist. Fitzgerald's career had been a remarkably successful one, and I knew that out of thirteen duels which he had fought in Ireland, in nine cases he had *killed* his man. In those days one never heard of the parties leaving the field, as not unfrequently now occurs, without blood having been spilt ; and the odds were, of course, in all cases, tremendously against a young and unpractised man, when matched with an experienced antagonist—my impression respecting the magnitude of the danger which my friend had incurred, was therefore by no means unwarranted. I now questioned O'Connor more accurately respecting the circumstances of his quarrel with Fitzgerald. It arose from some dispute respecting the application of a rule of piquet, at which game they had been playing, each interpreting it favourably to himself, and O'Connor having lost considerably, was in no mood to conduct an argument with temper—an altercation ensued, and that of rather a pungent nature, and the result was, that he left Fitzgerald's room rather abruptly, determined to demand an explanation in the most peremptory tone. For this purpose he had sent for M'Donough, and had commissioned him to deliver the note, which my arrival had fortunately intercepted. As it was now past noon, O'Connor made me promise to remain with him to dinner ; and we sat down a party of three, all in high spirits at the termination of our anxieties. It is necessary to mention, for the purpose of accounting for what follows, that Mrs. O'Connor, or as she was more euphoniously styled, the lady of Castle Connor, was precluded by ill-health from taking her place at the dinner table, and, indeed, seldom left her room before four o'clock.* We were sitting after dinner sipping our claret, and talking, and laughing, and enjoying ourselves exceedingly, when a servant, stepping into the room, informed his master that a gentleman wanted to speak with him.

"Request him, with my compliments, to walk in," said O'Connor ; and in a few moments a gentleman entered the room.

His appearance was any thing but prepossessing. He was a little above the middle size, spare, and raw-boned ; his face very red, his features sharp and bluish, and his age might be about sixty. His attire savoured a good deal of the *shabby-genteel;* his clothes, which had much of tarnished and faded pretension about them, did not fit him, and had not improbably fluttered in the stalls of Plunket-street. We had risen on his entrance, and O'Connor had twice requested of him to take a chair at the table, without his hearing, or at least noticing, the invitation ; while with a slow pace, and with an air of mingled importance and effrontery, he advanced into the centre of the apartment, and regarding our small party with a supercilious air, he said :

"I take the liberty of introducing myself—I am Captain M'Creagh, formerly of the — infantry. My business here is with a Mr. O'Connor, and the sooner it is despatched the better."

"I am the gentleman you name," said O'Connor ; "and as you appear impatient, we had better proceed to your commission without delay."

"Then, Mr. O'Connor, you will please to read that note," said the Captain, placing a sealed paper in his hand.

O'Connor read it through, and then observed—

"This is very extraordinary indeed. This note appears to me perfectly unaccountable."

"You are very young, Mr. O'Connor," said the Captain, with vulgar familiarity ; "but without much experience in these matters, I think you might have anticipated something like this. You know the old saying—"*second thoughts are best*—and so they are like to prove, by G——"

"You will have no objection, Captain M'Creagh, on the part of your friend, to my reading this note to these gentlemen ; they are both confidential friends of mine, and one of them has already acted for me in this buisness."

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* It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader, that at the period spoken of in this paper, the important hour of dinner occurred very nearly at noon.

"I can have no objection," replied the Captain, "to your doing what you please with your own. I have nothing more to do with that note once I put it safe into your hand; and when that is once done, it is all one to me, if you read it to half the world—that's *your* concern, and no affair of mine."

O'Connor then read the following:

"Mr. Fitzgerald begs leave to state, that upon re-perusing Mr. O'Connor's communication of this morning, carefully, with an experienced friend, he is forced to consider himself as challenged. His friend, Captain M'Creagh, has been empowered by him to make all the necessary arrangements.

"T—— Inn, Thursday."

I can hardly describe the astonishment with which I heard this note. I turned to the Captain, and said—

"Surely, sir, there is some mistake in all this?"

"Not the slightest, I'll assure you, sir," said he coolly; "the case is a very clear one, and I think my friend has pretty well made up his mind upon it. May I request your answer?" he continued, turning to O'Connor; "time is precious, you know."

O'Connor expressed his willingness to comply with the suggestion, and in a few minutes had folded and directed the following rejoinder:—

"Mr. O'Connor having received a satisfactory explanation from Mr. Fitzgerald, of the language used by that gentleman, feels that there no longer exists any grounds for misunderstanding, and wishes further to state, that the note of which Mr. Fitzgerald speaks was not intended as a challenge."

With this note the Captain departed; and as we did not doubt that the message which he had delivered had been suggested by some unintentional misconstruction of O'Connor's first *billet*, we felt assured that the conclusion of his last note would set the matter at rest. In this belief, however, we were mistaken; before we had left the table, and in an incredibly short time, the Captain returned. He entered the room with a countenance evidently tasked to avoid expressing the satisfaction which a consciousness of the nature of his mission had conferred; but in spite of all his efforts to look gravely unconcerned, there was a twinkle in the small grey eye, and an almost imperceptible motion in the corner of the mouth, which sufficiently betrayed his internal glee, as he placed a note in the hand of O'Connor. As the young man cast his eye over it, he coloured deeply, and turning to MacDonough, he said—

"You will have the goodness to make all the necessary arrangements for a meeting. Something has occurred to render one between me and Mr. Fitzgerald inevitable. Understand me literally, when I say that it is now totally impossible that this affair should be amicably arranged. You will have the goodness, M'Donough, to let me know as soon as all the particulars are arranged. Purcell," he continued, "will you have the kindness to accompany me?" and having bowed to M'Creagh, we left the room.

As I closed the door after me, I heard the Captain laugh, and thought I could distinguish the words—"By —— I knew Fitzgerald would bring him to his way of thinking before he stopped."

I followed O'Connor into his study, and on entering, the door being closed, he shewed me the communication which had determined him upon hostilities. Its language was grossly impertinent, and it concluded by actually threatening to "*post*" him, in case he further attempted "to be *off*." I cannot describe the agony of indignation in which O'Connor writhed under this insult. He said repeatedly that "he was a degraded and dishonoured man," that "he was dragged into the field," that "there was ignominy in the very thought that such a letter should have been directed to him." It was in vain that I reasoned against this impression; the conviction that he had been disgraced had taken possession of his mind. He said again and again that nothing but his *death* could remove the stain which his indecision had cast upon the name of his family. I hurried to the hall, on hearing M'Donough and the Captain passing, and reached the door just in time to hear the latter say, as he mounted his horse—

"All the rest can be arranged on the spot; and so farewell, Mr. M'Donough—we'll meet at Philippi you know;" and with this classical allusion, which was accompanied with a grin and a bow, and probably served many such occasions, the Captain took his departure.

M'Donough briefly stated the few particulars which had been arranged. The parties were to meet at the stand-house, in the race-ground, which lay at about an equal distance between Castle Connor and the town of T——. The hour appointed was half-past five on the next morning, at which time the twilight would be sufficiently advanced to afford a distinct view; and the weapons to be employed were *pistols*—M'Creagh having claimed, on the part of his friend, all the advantages of the *challenged* party, and having, consequently, insisted upon the choice of "*tools*," as he expressed himself; and it was further stipulated that the utmost secrecy should be observed, as Fitzgerald would incur great risk from the violence of the peasantry, in case the affair took wind. These conditions were, of course, agreed upon by O'Connor, and M'Donough left the castle, having appointed four o'clock upon the next morning as the hour of his return, by which time it would be his business to provide every thing necessary for the meeting. On his departure, O'Connor requested me to remain with him upon that evening, saying that "he could not bear to be alone with his mother." It was to me a most painful request, but at the same time one which I could not think of refusing. I felt, however, that the difficulty at least of the task which I had to perform, would be in some measure mitigated by the arrival of two relations of O'Connor upon that evening.

"It is very fortunate," said O'Connor, whose thoughts had been running upon the same subject, "that the O'Gradys will be with us to-night; their gaiety and good-humour will relieve us from a heavy task. I trust that nothing may occur to prevent their coming." Fervently concurring in the same wish, I accompanied O'Connor into the parlour, there to await the arrival of his mother.

God grant that I may never spend such another evening!—the O'Gradys *did* come, but their high and noisy spirits, so far from relieving me, did but give additional gloom to the despondency, I might say the despair, which filled my heart with misery—the terrible forebodings which I could not for an instant silence, turned their laughter into discord, and seemed to mock the smiles and jests of the unconscious party. When I turned my eyes upon the mother, I thought I never had seen her look so proudly and so lovingly upon her son before—it cut me to the heart—oh! how cruelly I was deceiving her! I was a hundred times on the very point of starting up, and at all hazards, declaring to her how matters were; but other feelings subdued my better emotions. Oh! what monsters are we made of by the fashions of the world! how are our kindlier and nobler feelings warped or destroyed by their baleful influences! I felt that it would not be *honourable*, that it would not be *etiquette* to betray O'Connor's secret. I sacrificed a higher and a nobler duty than I have since been called upon to perform, to the dastardly fear of bearing the unmerited censure of a world, from which I was about to retire. Oh Fashion! thou gaudy idol, whose feet are red with the blood of human sacrifice, would I had always felt towards thee as I now do!

O'Connor was not dejected; on the contrary, he joined with loud and lively alacrity in the hilarity of the little party; but I could see in the flush of his cheek, and in the unusual brightness of his eye, all the excitement of fever—he was making an effort almost beyond his strength, but he succeeded—and when his mother rose to leave the room, it was with the impression that her son was the gayest and most light-hearted of the company. Twice or thrice she had risen with the intention of retiring, but O'Connor with an eagerness, which I alone could understand, had persuaded her to remain until the usual hour of her departure had long past; and when at length she arose, declaring that she could not possibly stay longer, I alone could comprehend the desolate change which passed over his manner; and when I saw them part, it was with the sickening conviction that those two beings, so dear to one another, so loved, so cherished, should meet no more.

O'Connor briefly informed his cousins of the position in which he was placed, requesting them at the same time to accompany him to the field, and this having been settled, we separated, each to his own apartment. I had wished to sit up with O'Connor, who had matters to arrange sufficient to employ him until the hour appointed for M'Donough's visit; but he would not hear of it, and I was forced, though sorely against my will, to leave him without a companion. I went to my room, and in a state of excitement, which I cannot describe, I paced for hours up and down its narrow precincts, I could not (who could?) analyse the strange, contradictory, torturing feelings which, while I recoiled in shrink-ing horror from the scene which the morning was to bring, yet forced me to wish the intervening time annihilated; each hour that the clock told seemed to vibrate and tinkle through every nerve—my agitation was dreadful—fancy conjured up the forms of those who filled my thoughts with more than the vividness of reality: things seemed to glide through the dusky shadows of the room. I saw the dreaded form of Fitzgerald—I heard the hated laugh of the Captain—and again, the features of O'Connor would appear before me, with ghastly distinctness, pale and writhed in death, the gouts of gore clotted in the mouth, and the eye-balls glared and staring. Scared with the visions which seemed to throng with unceasing rapidity and vividness, I threw open the window, and looked out upon the quiet scene around. I turned my eyes in the direction of the town; a heavy cloud was louring darkly about it, and I in impious frenzy prayed to God that it might burst in avenging fires upon the murderous wretch who lay beneath; at length sick and giddy with excess of excitement, I threw myself upon the bed, without removing my clothes, and endeavoured to compose myself, so far as to remain quiet until the hour for our assembling should arrive.

A few minutes before four o'clock I stole noiselessly down stairs, and made my way to the small study already mentioned; a candle was burning within; and when I opened the door O'Connor was reading a book, which, on seeing me, he hastily closed, colouring slightly as he did so. We exchanged a cordial but mournful greeting; and after a slight pause he said, laying his hand upon the volume which he had shut a moment before, "Purcell, I feel perfectly calm, though I cannot say that I have much hope as to the issue of this morning's rencounter. I shall avoid half the danger; if I must fall, I am determined I shall not go down to the grave with his blood upon my hands. I have resolved not to fire at Fitzgerald—that is, to fire in such a direction as to assure myself against hitting him: do not say a word of this to the O'Gradys, your doing so would only produce fruitless altercation—they could not understand my motives—I feel convinced that I shall not leave the field alive—if I must die to-day, I shall avoid an awful aggravation of wretchedness.—Purcell," he continued after a little space, "I was so weak as to feel almost ashamed of the manner in which I was occupied as you entered the room. Yes *I*, *I* who will be before this evening, a cold and lifeless clod, was ashamed to have spent my last moment of reflection in prayer. God pardon me, God pardon me," he repeated. I took his hand and pressed it, but I could not speak. I sought for words of comfort, but they would not come. To have uttered one cheering sentence, I must have contradicted every impression of my own mind. I felt too much awed to attempt it. Shortly afterwards M'Donough arrived. No wretched patient ever underwent a more thrilling revulsion, at the first sight of the case of surgical instruments under which he had to suffer, than did I, upon beholding a certain oblong flat mahogany box, bound with brass, and of about two feet in length, laid upon the table in the hall. O'Connor thanking him for his punctuality, requested him to come into his study for a moment, when, with a melancholy collectedness, he proceeded to make arrangements for our witnessing his will. The document was a brief one, and the whole matter was just arranged, when the two O'Gradys crept softly into the room. "So! last will and testament," said the elder; "Why, you have a very *blue* notion of these matters. I tell you, you need not be uneasy. I remember very well, when young Ryan of Ballykealey met M'Neil the duellist, bets ran twenty to one against him. I stole away from school, and had a peep at the fun as well as the best of them; they fired together; Ryan received the ball through the collar of his coat, and M'Neil in the temple; he spun like a top: it was a most unexpected thing, and disappointed his friends damnably. It was admitted, however, to have been very pretty shooting upon both sides—to be sure," he continued, pointing to the *will*, "you are in the right to keep upon the safe side of fortune; but then, there is no occasion to be altogether so devilish down in the mouth as you appear to be." "You will allow," said O'Connor, "that the chances are heavily against me." "Why, let me see," he replied, "not so hollow a thing either; let me see, he'll say about four to one against you, you may chance to throw doublets like him I told you of, and then what becomes of the odds I'd like to know? But let things go as they will, I'll give and take four to one, in pounds and tens of pounds. There, M'Donough, there's a *get* for you; b—t me, if it is not. Poh! the fellow is stolen away," he continued observing that the object of his proposal had left the room; "but d—— it, Purcell, you are fond of a *soft thing* too, in a quiet way, I'm sure you are, so curse me if I do not make you the same offer—is it a go?" I was too much disgusted to make any reply, but, I believe, my looks expressed my feelings sufficiently, for in a moment he said, "Well, I see there is nothing to be done here, so we may as well be stirring. M'Donough, myself, and my brother will saddle the horses in a jiffy, while you and Purcell settle any thing which remains to be arranged;" so saying he left the room with as much alacrity as if it were to prepare for a fox hunt. Selfish, heartless fool! I have often since heard him spoken of as *a cursed good natured dog*, and *a d—d good fellow*; but such eulogies as these are not calculated to mitigate the abhorrence with which his conduct, upon that morning inspired me.

The chill mists of night were still hovering on the landscape, as our party left the castle. It was a raw, comfortless morning; a kind of drizzling fog hung heavily over the scene, dimming the light of the sun, which had now risen, into a pale and even a grey. As the appointed hour was fast approaching, it was proposed that we should enter the race-ground, at a point close to the stand-house—a measure which would save us a ride of nearly two miles, over a broken road; at which distance there was an open entrance into the race ground. Here, accordingly, we dismounted, and, leaving our horses in the care of a country fellow who happened to be stirring at that early hour, we proceeded up a narrow lane, over a side wall of which we were to climb into the open ground where stood the now deserted building, under which the meeting was to take place. Our progress was intercepted by the unexpected appearance of an old woman, who, in the scarlet cloak which is the picturesque characteristic of the female peasantry of the south, was moving slowly down the avenue to meet us, uttering that peculiarly wild and piteous lamentation well known by the name of "the Irish cry," accompanied throughout by all the customary gesticulation of passionate grief. This rencounter was more awkward than we had at first anticipated; for, upon a nearer approach, the person proved to be no other than an old and attached dependant of the family, and who had herself nursed O'Connor. She quickened her pace as we advanced almost to a run; and, throwing her arms round O'Connor's neck, she poured forth such a torrent of lamentation, reproach, and endearment, as showed that she was aware of the nature of our purpose, whence and by what means I knew not. It was in vain that he sought to satisfy her by evasion, and gently to extricate himself from her embrace. She knelt upon the ground, and clasped her arms round his legs, uttering all the while such touching supplications, such cutting and passionate expressions of woe, as went to my very heart. At length, with much difficulty, we passed this most painful interruption; and, crossing the boundary wall, was placed beyond her reach. The O'Gradys damned her for a troublesome hag, and passed on with O'Connor, but I remained behind for a moment. The poor woman looked hopelessly at the high wall which separated her from him she had loved from infancy, and to be with whom at that minute she would have given worlds; she took her seat upon a solitary stone under the opposite wall; and there, in a low, subdued key, she continued to utter her sorrow in words so desolate, yet expressing such a tenderness of devotion, as wrung my heart.

"My poor woman," I said, laying my hand gently upon her shoulder, "you will make yourself ill; the morning is very cold, and your cloak is but a thin defence against the damp and chill. Pray return home, and take this; it may be useful to you."

So saying, I dropped a purse, with what money I had about me, into her lap, but it lay there unheeded; she did not hear me.

"Oh! my child, my child, my darlin'," she sobbed, "are you gone from me? are you gone from me? Ah, mavourneen, mavourneen, you'll never come back alive to me again. The crathur that slept on my bosom—the lovin' crathur that I was so proud of—they'll kill him, they'll kill him. Oh, voh! voh!"

The affecting tone, the feeling, the abandonment with which all this was uttered, none can conceive who have not heard the lamentations of the Irish peasantry. It brought tears to my eyes. I saw that no consolation of mine could soothe her grief, so I turned and departed; but as I rapidly traversed the level sward which separated me from my companions, now considerably in advance, I could still hear the wailings of the solitary mourner.

As we approached the stand house, it was evident that our antagonists had already arrived. Our path lay by the side of a high fence, constructed of loose stones, and, on turning a sharp angle at its extremity, we found ourselves close to the appointed spot, and within a few yards of a crowd of persons, some mounted and some on foot, evidently awaiting our arrival. The affair had unaccountably taken wind, as the number of the expectants clearly shewed; but for this there was now no remedy. As our little party advanced, we were met and saluted by several acquaintances, whom curiosity, if no deeper feeling, had brought to the place. Fitzgerald and the Captain had arrived, and, having dismounted, were both standing upon the sod. The former, as we approached, bowed slightly and sullenly—while the latter, evidently in high good humour, made his most courteous obeisance. No time was to be lost; and the two seconds immediately withdrew to a slight distance, for the purpose of completing the last minute arrangements. It was a brief but horrible interval—each returned to his principal to communicate the result, which was soon caught up and repeated from mouth to mouth throughout the crowd. I felt a strange and insurmountable reluctance to hear the sickening particulars detailed; and as I stood irresolute at some distance from the principal parties, a top-booted *squireen*, with a hunting whip in his hand, bustling up to a companion of his, exclaimed—

"Not fire together!—did you ever hear the like? If Fitzgerald gets the first shot, all is over. M'Donough sold the pass, by ——, and that is the long and the short of it."

The parties now moved down a little to a small level space, suited to the purpose; and the Captain, addressing M'Donough, said—

"Mr. M'Donough, you'll now have the goodness to toss for choice of ground; as the light comes from the east, the line must of course run north and south. Will you be so obliging as to toss up a crown piece, while I call?"

A coin was instantly chucked into the air: the Captain cried "Harp." The *head* was uppermost, and M'Donough immediately made choice of the southern point at which to place his friend—a position which it will be easily seen had the advantage of turning his back upon the light—no trifling superiority of location. The Captain turned with a kind of laugh, and said—

"By ——, Sir, you are as cunning as a dead pig: but you forgot one thing. My friend is a left-handed gunner, though never a bit the worse for that; so you see there is no odds as far as the choice of light goes."

He then proceeded to measure nine paces in a direction running north and south, and the principals took their ground.

"I must be troublesome to you once again, Mr. M'Donough. One toss more, and everything is complete. We must settle who is to have the *first slap*."

A piece of money was again thrown into the air; again the Captain lost *the toss*, and M'Donough proceeded to load the pistols. I happened to stand near Fitzgerald, and I overheard the Captain, with a chuckle, say something to him in which the word "*cravat*" was repeated. It instantly occurred to me that the Captain's attention was directed to a bright-coloured muffler which O'Connor wore round his neck, and which would afford his antagonist a distinct and favourable mark. I instantly urged him to remove it, and at length, with difficulty, succeeded. He seemed perfectly careless as to any precaution. Everything was now ready; the pistol was placed in O'Connor's hand, and he only awaited the word from the Captain. M'Creagh then said—

"Mr. M'Donough, is your principal ready?"

M'Donough replied in the affirmative; and, after a slight pause, the Captain, as had been arranged, uttered the words—"Ready, fire."

O'Connor fired, but so wide of the mark, that some one in the crowd exclaimed—

"Fired in the air."

"Who says he fired in the air?" thundered Fitzgerald. "By ——, he lies, whoever he is"—there was a silence—"but even if he was fool enough to fire in the air, it is not in *his* power to put an end to the quarrel by *that*. D—n my soul, if I am come here to be played with like a child, and by the Almighty —— you shall hear more of this, each and everyone of you, before I'm satisfied."

A kind of low murmur, or rather groan, was now raised, and a slight motion was observable in the crowd, as if to intercept Fitzgerald's passage to his horse. M'Creagh, drawing the horse close to the spot where Fitzgerald stood, threatened, with the most awful imprecations, "to blow the brains out of the first man who should dare to press on them."

O'Connor now interfered, requesting the crowd to forbear, and some degree of order was restored. He then said, "that in firing as he did, he had no intention whatever of waiving his right of firing upon Fitzgerald, and of depriving that gentleman of his right of prosecuting the affair to the utmost—that if any person present imagined that he intended to fire in the air, he begged to set him right; since, so far from seeking to extort an unwilling reconciliation, he was determined that no power on earth should induce him to concede one inch of ground to Mr. Fitzgerald."

This announcement was received with a shout by the crowd, who now resumed their places at either side of the plot of ground which had been measured. The principals took their places once more, and M'Creagh proceeded, with the nicest and most anxious care, to load the pistols; and this task being accomplished, Fitzgerald whispered something in the Captain's ear, who instantly drew his friend's horse so as to place him within a step of his rider, and then tightened the girths. This accomplished, Fitzgerald proceeded deliberately to remove his coat, which he threw across his horse in front of the saddle; and then, with the assistance of M'Creagh, he rolled the shirt sleeve up to the shoulder, so as to leave the whole of his muscular arm perfectly naked. A cry of "Coward, coward! butcher, butcher!" arose from the crowd. Fitzgerald paused.

"Do you object, Mr. M'Donough? and upon what grounds, if you please?" said he.

"Certainly he does not," replied O'Connor; and, turning to M'Donough, he added, "pray let there be no unnecessary delay."

"There is no objection, then," said Fitzgerald.

"*I* object," said the younger of the O'Gradys, "if nobody else will."

"And who the devil are you, that *dares* to object?" shouted Fitzgerald; "and what d—d presumption prompts you to *dare* to wag your tongue here?"

"I am Mr. O'Grady, of Castle Blake," replied the young man, now much enraged; "and, by ——, you shall answer for your language to me."

"Shall I, by ——? Shall I?" cried he, with a laugh of brutal scorn; "the more the merrier, d—n the doubt of it—so now hold your tongue, for I promise you you shall have business enough of your own to think about, and that before long."

There was an appalling ferocity in his tone and manner which no words could convey. He seemed transformed; he was actually like a man possessed. Was it possible, I thought, that I beheld the courteous gentleman, the gay, good-humoured retailer of amusing anecdote with whom, scarce two days ago, I had laughed and chatted, in the blasphemous and murderous ruffian who glared and stormed before me!

O'Connor interposed, and requested that time should not be unnecessarily lost.

"You have not got a second coat on?" enquired the Captain. "I beg pardon, but my duty to my friend requires that I should ascertain the point."

O'Connor replied in the negative. The Captain expressed himself as satisfied, adding, in what he meant to be a complimentary strain, "that he knew Mr. O'Connor would scorn to employ padding or any unfair mode of protection."

There was now a breathless silence. O'Connor stood perfectly motionless; and, excepting the death-like paleness of his features, he exhibited no sign of agitation. His eye was steady—his lip did not tremble—his attitude was calm. The Captain, having re-examined the priming of the pistols, placed one of them in the hand of Fitzgerald.—M'Donough enquired whether the parties were prepared, and having been answered in the affirmative, he proceeded to give the word, "Ready." Fitzgerald raised his hand, but almost instantly lowered it again. The crowd had pressed too much forward as it appeared, and his eye had been unsteadied by the flapping of the skirt of a furze *riding coat* worn by one of the spectators.

"In the name of my principal," said the Captain, "I must and do insist upon these gentlemen moving back a little: we ask but little; fair play, and no favour."

The crowd moved as requested. M'Donough repeated his former question, and was answered as before. There was a breathless silence. Fitzgerald fixed his eye upon O'Connor. The appointed signal, "Ready, fire!" was given. There was a pause while one might slowly reckon three—Fitzgeral fired—and O'Connor fell helplessly upon the ground.

"There is no time to be lost," said M'Creagh; "for, by ——, you have done for him."

So saying, he threw himself upon his horse, and was instantly followed at a hard gallop by Fitzgerald.

"Cold-blooded murder, if ever murder was committed," said O'Grady. "He shall hang for it; d—n me, but he shall."

A hopeless attempt was made to overtake the fugitives; but they were better mounted than any of their pursuers, and escaped with ease. Curses and actual yells of execration followed their course; and as, in crossing the brow of a neighbouring hill, they turned round in the saddle to observe if they were pursued, every gesture which could express fury and defiance was exhausted by the enraged and defeated multitude.

"Clear the way, boys," said young O'Grady, who with me was kneeling beside O'Connor, while we supported him in our arms; "do not press so close, and be d—d; can't you let the fresh air to him; don't you see he's dying?"

On opening his waistcoat we easily detected the wound: it was a little below the chest—a small blue mark, from which oozed a single heavy drop of blood.

"He is bleeding but little—that is a comfort at all events," said one of the gentlemen who surrounded the wounded man.

Another suggested the expediency of his being removed homeward with as little delay as possible, and recommended, for this purpose, that a door should be removed from its hinges, and the patient, laid upon this, should be conveyed from the field. Upon this rude bier my poor friend was carried from that fatal ground towards Castle Connor. I walked close by his side, and observed every motion of his. He seldom opened his eyes, and was perfectly still, excepting a nervous *working* of the fingers, and a slight, almost imperceptible twitching of the features, which took place, however, only at intervals. The first word he uttered was spoken as we approached the entrance of the castle itself, when he said, repeatedly, "the back way, the back way." He feared lest his mother should meet him abruptly and without preparation; but although this fear was groundless, since she never left her room until late in the day, yet it was thought advisable, and, indeed, necessary, to caution all the servants most strongly against breathing a hint to their mistress of the events which had befallen. Two or three gentlemen had ridden from the field one after another, promising that they should overtake our party before it reached the castle, bringing with them medical aid from one quarter or another; and we determined that Mrs. O'Connor should not know anything of the occurrence until the opinion of some professional man should have determined the extent of the injury which her son had sustained—a course of conduct which would at least have the effect of relieving her from the horrors of suspense. When O'Connor found himself in his own room, and laid upon his own bed, he appeared much revived—so much so, that I could not help admitting a strong hope that all might yet be well.

"After all, Purcell," said he, with a melancholy smile, and speaking with evident difficulty, "I believe I have got off with a trifling wound. I am sure it cannot be fatal, I feel so little pain—almost none."

I cautioned him against fatiguing himself by endeavouring to speak; and he remained quiet for a little time. At length he said—

"Purcell, I trust this lesson shall not have been given in vain. God has been very merciful to me; I feel I have an internal confidence that I am not wounded mortally. Had I been fatally wounded—had I been killed upon the spot, only think on it"—and he closed his eyes as if the very thought made him dizzy—"struck down into the grave, unprepared as I am, in the very blossom of my sins, without a moment of repentance or of reflection; I must have been lost—lost for ever and ever."

I prevailed upon him, with some difficulty, to abstain from such agitating reflections, and at length induced him to court such repose as his condition admitted of, by remaining perfectly silent, and as much as possible without motion.

O'Connor and I only were in the

room; he had lain for some time in tolerable quiet, when I thought I distinguished the bustle attendant upon the arrival of some one at the castle, and went eagerly to the window, believing, or at least hoping, that the sounds might announce the approach of the medical man, whom we all longed most impatiently to see. My conjecture was right; I had the satisfaction of seeing him dismount and prepare to enter the castle, when my observations were interrupted, and my attention was attracted by a smothered, gurgling sound proceeding from the bed in which lay the wounded man. I instantly turned round, and in doing so the spectacle which met my eyes was sufficiently shocking. I had left O'Connor lying in the bed, supported by pillows, perfectly calm, and with his eyes closed: he was now lying nearly in the same position, his eyes open and almost starting from their sockets, with every feature pale and distorted as death, and vomiting blood in quantities that were frightful. I rushed to the door and called for assistance; the paroxysm, though violent, was brief, and O'Connor sank into a swoon so deep and death-like, that I feared he should waken no more. The surgeon, a little, fussy man, but I believe with some skill to justify his pretensions, now entered the room, carrying his case of instruments, and followed by servants bearing basins and water and bandages of linen. He relieved our doubts by instantly assuring us that "the patient" was still living; and at the same time professed his determination to take advantage of the muscular relaxation which the faint had induced to examine the wound—adding that a patient was more easily "handled" when in a swoon than under other circumstances. After examining the wound in front where the ball had entered, he passed his hand round beneath the shoulder, and after a little pause he shook his head, observing that he feared very much that one of the *vertibræ* was fatally injured, but that he could not say decidedly until his patient should revive a little.—Though his language was very technical, and consequently to me nearly unintelligible, I could perceive plainly by his manner that he considered the case as almost hopeless.

O'Connor gradually gave some signs of returning animation, and at length was so far restored as to be enabled to speak. After some few general questions as to how he felt affected, &c. &c., the surgeon, placing his hand upon his leg, and pressing it slightly, asked him if he felt any pressure upon the limb? O'Connor answered in the negative—he pressed harder, and repeated the question; still the answer was the same, till at length, by repeated experiments, he ascertained that all that part of the body which lay behind the wound was paralysed, proving that the spine must have received some fatal injury.

"Well, doctor," said O'Connor, after the examination of the wound was over; "well, I shall do; shan't I?"

The physician was silent for a moment, and then, as if with an effort, he replied,

"Indeed, my dear sir, it would not be honest to flatter you with much hope."

"Eh?" said O'Connor, with more alacrity than I had seen him exhibit since the morning; "surely, I did not hear you aright; I spoke of my recovery—surely there is no doubt; there can be none—speak frankly, doctor, for God's sake—am I dying?"

The surgeon was evidently no stoic, and his manner had extinguished in me every hope, even before he had uttered a word in reply.

"You are—you are indeed dying. There is no hope; I should but deceive you if I held out any."

As the surgeon uttered these terrible words, the hands which O'Connor had stretched towards him while awaiting his reply fell powerless by his side; his head sank forward; it seemed as if horror and despair had unstrung every nerve and sinew; he appeared to collapse and shrink together as a plant might, under the influence of a withering spell.

It has often been my fate, since then, to visit the chambers of death and of suffering; I have witnessed fearful agonies of body and of soul; the mysterious shudderings of the departing spirit, and the heart-rending desolation of the survivors; the severing of the tenderest ties, the piteous yearnings of unavailing love—of all these things the sad duties of my profession have made me a witness. But, generally speaking, I have observed, in such scenes something to mitigate, if not the sorrows, at least the terrors, of death; the dying man seldom seems to feel the reality of his situation; a dull consciousness of approaching dissolution, a dim anticipation of unconsciousness and insensibility, are the feelings which most nearly border upon an appreciation of his state; the film of death seems to have overspread the mind's eye, objects lose their distinctness, and float cloudily before it, and the apathy and apparent indifference with which men recognize the sure advances of immediate death, rob that awful hour of much of its terrors, and the death-bed of its otherwise inevitable agonies. This is a merciful dispensation; but the rule has its exceptions—its terrible exceptions. When a man is brought in an instant, by some sudden accident, to the very verge of the fathomless pit of death, with all his recollections awake, and his perceptions keenly and vividly alive, without previous illness to subdue the tone of the mind as to dull its apprehensions—then, and then only, the deathbed is truly terrible.

Oh, what a contrast did O'Connor afford, as he lay in all the abject helplessness of undisguised terror upon his death-bed, to the proud composure with which he had taken the field that morning. I had always before thought of death as of a quiet sleep stealing gradually upon exhausted nature, made welcome by suffering, or, at least, softened by resignation; I had never before stood by the side of one upon whom the hand of death had been thus suddenly laid; I had never seen the tyrant arrayed in his terror till then. Never before or since have I seen horror so intensely depicted. It seemed actually as if O'Connor's mind had been unsettled by the shock; the few words he uttered were marked with all the incoherence of distraction; but it was not words that marked his despair most strongly, the appalling and heart-sickening groans, I might almost say *howls*, that came from the terror-stricken and dying man must haunt me while I live; the expression, too, of hopeless, imploring agony with which he turned his eyes from object to object, I can never forget. At length, appearing suddenly to recollect himself, he said, with startling alertness, but in a voice so altered that I scarce could recognize the tones,

"Purcell, Purcell, go and tell my poor mother; she must know all, and then, quick, quick, quick, call your uncle, bring him here; I must have a chance." He made a violent but fruitless effort to rise, and after a slight pause continued, with deep and urgent solemnity, "Doctor, how long shall I live? Don't flatter me. Compliments at a death-bed are out of place; doctor, for God's sake, as you would not have my soul perish with my body, do not mock a dying man; have I an hour to live?"

"Certainly," replied the surgeon; "if you will but endeavour to keep yourself tranquil; otherwise I cannot answer for a moment."

"Well, doctor," said the patient, "I will obey you; now, Purcell, my first and dearest friend, will you inform my poor mother of—of what you see, and return with your uncle; I know you will."

I took the dear fellow's hand and kissed it, it was the only answer I could give, and left the room. I asked the first female servant I chanced to meet, if her mistress were yet up, and was answered in the affirmative. Without giving myself time to hesitate, I requested her to lead me to her lady's room, which she accordingly did; she entered first, I suppose to announce my name, and I followed closely; the poor mother said something, and held out her hands to welcome me; I strove for words; I could not speak, but nature found expression; I threw myself at her feet and covered her hands with kisses and tears. My manner was enough; with a quickness almost preternatural she understood it all; she simply said the words, "O'Connor is killed;" she uttered no more.

How I left the room I know not; I rode madly to my uncle's residence, and brought him back with me—all the rest is a blank. I remember standing by O'Connor's bedside, and kissing the cold pallid forehead again and again; I remember the pale serenity of the beautiful features; I remember that I looked upon the dead face of my friend, and I remember no more. For many months I lay writhing and raving in the phrenzy of brain fever; a hundred times I stood tottering at the brink of death, and long after my restoration to bodily health was assured, it appeared doubtful whether I should ever be restored to reason. But God dealt very mercifully with me; his mighty hand rescued me from death and from madness when one or other appeared inevitable. As soon as I was permitted pen and ink, I wrote to the bereaved mother in a tone bordering upon phrenzy; I accused myself of having made her childless; I called myself a murderer;

I believed myself accursed; I could not find terms strong enough to express my abhorrence of my own conduct. But, oh! what an answer I received, so mild, so sweet, from the desolate childless mother; its words spoke all that is beautiful in Christianity—it was forgiveness—it was resignation. I am convinced that to that letter, operating as it did upon a mind already predisposed, is owing my final determination to devote myself to that profession in which, for more than half a century, I have been an humble minister. Years roll away, and we count them not as they pass, but their influence is not the less certain that it is silent; the deepest wounds are gradually healed, the keenest griefs are mitigated, and we, in character, feelings, tastes, and pursuits, become such altered beings, that but for some few indelible marks which past events must leave behind them, which time may soften, but can never efface; our very identity would be dubious. Who has not felt all this at one time or other? Who has not mournfully felt it? This trite, but natural train of reflection filled my mind as I approached the domain of Castle Connor, some ten years after the occurrence of the events above narrated. Everything looked the same as when I had left it; the old trees stood as graceful and as grand as ever; no plough had violated the soft green sward; no utilitarian hand had constrained the wanderings of the clear and sportive stream, or disturbed the lichen-covered rocks through which it gushed, or the wild coppice that overshadowed its sequestered nooks—but the eye that looked upon these things was altered, and memory was busy with other days, shrouding in sadness every beauty that met my sight. As I approached the castle my emotions became so acutely painful that I had almost returned the way I came, without accomplishing the purpose for which I had gone thus far, and nothing but the conviction that my having been in the neighbourhood of Castle Connor without visiting its desolate mistress, would render me justly liable to the severest censure, could overcome my reluctance to encountering the heavy task which was before me. I recognized the old servant who opened the door, but he did not know me; I was completely changed; suffering of body and mind had altered me in feature and in bearing, as much as in character. I asked the man whether his mistress ever saw visitors; he answered,

"But seldom; perhaps, however, if she knew that an old friend wished to see her for a few minutes, she would gratify him so far."

At the same time I placed my card in his hand and requested him to deliver it to his mistress. He returned in a few moments, saying that his lady would be happy to see me in the parlour, and I accordingly followed him to the door, which he opened. I entered the room, and was in a moment at the side of my early friend and benefactress. I was too much agitated to speak; I could only hold the hands which she gave me, while, spite of every effort, the tears flowed fast and bitterly.

"It was kind, very, very kind of you to come to see me," she said, with far more composure than I could have commanded; "I see it is very painful to you."

I endeavoured to compose myself, and for a little time we remained silent; she was the first to speak—

"You will be surprised, Mr. Purcell, when you observe the calmness with which I can speak of him who was dearest to me, who is gone; but my thoughts are always with him, and the recollections of his love,"—her voice faltered a little,—"and the hope of meeting him hereafter enables me to bear existence."

I said I know not what; something about resignation, I believe.

"I hope I am resigned; God make me more so," she said. "Oh, Mr. Purcell, I have often thought I loved my lost child *too* well—it was natural—he was my only child—he was——" She could not proceed for a few moments; "it was very natural that I should love him as I did; but it may have been sinful; I have often thought so. I doated upon him—I idolized him—I thought too little of other holier affections; and God may have taken him from me, only to teach me, by this severe lesson, that I owed to heaven a larger share of my heart than to anything earthly. I cannot think of him now without more solemn feelings than if he were with me—there is something holy in our thoughts of the dead; I feel it so." After a pause, she continued—"Mr. Purcell, do you remember his features well? they were very beautiful." I assured her that I did. "Then you can tell me if you think this a faithful likeness." She took from a drawer a case in which lay a miniature. I took it reverently from her hands; it was indeed very like—touchingly like—I told her so; and she seemed gratified.

As the evening was wearing fast, and I had far to go, I hastened to terminate my visit, as I had intended, by placing in her hand a letter from her son to me, written during his sojourn upon the continent. I requested her to keep it; it was one in which he spoke much of her, and in terms of the tenderest affection. As she read its contents the heavy tears gathered in her eyes, and fell, one by one, upon the page; she wiped them away, but they still flowed fast and silently. It was in vain that she tried to read it; her eyes were filled with tears; so she folded the letter, and placed it in her bosom. I rose to depart, and she also rose.

"I will not ask you to delay your departure," said she; "your visit here must have been a painful one to you; I cannot find words to thank you for the letter as I would wish, or for all your kindness. It has given me a pleasure greater than I thought could have fallen to the lot of a creature so very desolate as I am; may God bless you for it;" and thus we parted; I never saw Castle Connor or its solitary inmate more.

THE DRUNKARD'S DREAM.

BEING A FOURTH EXTRACT FROM THE LEGACY OF THE LATE F. PURCELL, P. P. OF DRUMCOOLAGH.

> " All this *he* told with some confusion and
> Dismay, the usual consequence of dreams
> Of the unpleasant kind, with none at hand
> To expound their vain and visionary gleams.
> I've known some odd ones which seemed really planned
> Prophetically, [illegible] that which one deems
> ' A strange coincidence,' to use a phrase
> By which such things are settled now-a-days.' "
>
> BYRON.

DREAMS—What age, or what country of the world has not felt and acknowledged the mystery of their origin and end? I have thought not a little upon the subject, seeing it is one which has been often forced upon my attention, and sometimes strangely enough; and yet I have never arrived at any thing which at all appeared a satisfactory conclusion. It does appear that a mental phenomenon so extraordinary cannot be wholly without its use. We know, indeed, that in the olden times it has been made the organ of communication between the Deity and his creatures; and when, as I have seen, a dream produces upon a mind, to all appearance hopelessly reprobate and depraved, an effect so powerful and so lasting as to break down the inveterate habits, and to reform the life of an abandoned sinner. We see in the result, in the reformation of morals, which appeared incorrigible in the reclamation of a human soul which seemed to be irretrievably lost, something more than could be produced by a mere chimæra of the slumbering fancy, something more than could arise from the capricious images of a terrified imagination; but once prevented, we behold in all these things, in the tremendous and mysterious results, the operation of the hand of God. And while Reason rejects as absurd the superstition which will read a prophecy in every dream, she may, without violence to herself, recognize, even in the wildest and most incongruous of the wanderings of a slumbering intellect, the evidences and the fragments of a language which may be spoken, which *has* been spoken to terrify, to warn, and to command. We have reason to believe too, by the promptness of action, which in the age of the prophets, followed all intimations of this kind, and by the strength of conviction and strange permanence of the effects resulting from certain dreams in latter times, which effects ourselves may have witnessed, that when this medium of communication has been employed by the Deity, the evidences of his presence have been unequivocal. My thoughts were directed to this subject, in a manner to leave a lasting impression upon my mind, by the events which I shall now relate, the statement of which, however extraordinary, is nevertheless *accurately correct*.

About the year 17—— having been appointed to the living of C——h, I rented a small house in the town, which bears the same name: one morning, in the month of November, I was awakened before my usual time, by my servant, who bustled into my bed-room for the purpose of announcing a sick call. As the Catholic Church holds her last rites to be totally indispensable to the safety of the departing sinner, no conscientious clergyman can afford a moment's unnecessary delay, and in little more than five minutes I stood ready cloaked and booted for the road in the small front parlour, in which the messenger, who was to act as my guide, awaited my coming. I found a poor little girl crying piteously near the door, and after some slight difficulty I ascertained that her father was either dead, or just dying.

"And what may be your father's name, my poor child?" said I. She held down her head, as if ashamed. I repeated the question, and the wretched little creature burst into floods of tears, still more bitter than she had shed before. At length, almost provoked by conduct which appeared to me so unreasonable, I began to lose patience, spite of the pity which I could not help feeling towards her, and I said rather harshly, "If you will not tell me the name of the person to whom you would lead me, your silence can arise from no good motive, and I might be justified in refusing to go with you at all."

"Oh! don't say that, don't say that," cried she. "Oh! sir, it was that I was afeard of when I would not tell you—I was afeard when you heard his name you would not come with me; but it is no use hidin' it now—it's Patt Connell, the carpenter, your honour."

She looked in my face with the most earnest anxiety, as if her very existence depended upon what she should read there; but I relieved her at once. The name, indeed, was most unpleasantly familiar to me; but, however fruitless my visits and advice might have been at another time, the present was too fearful an occasion to suffer my doubts of their utility as my reluctance to re-attempting what appeared a hopeless task to weigh even against the lightest chance, that a consciousness of his imminent danger might produce in him a more docile and tractable disposition. Accordingly I told the child to lead the way, and followed her in silence. She hurried rapidly through the long narrow street which forms the great thoroughfare of the town. The darkness of the hour, rendered still deeper by the close approach of the old fashioned houses, which lowered in tall obscurity on either side of the way; the damp dreary chill which renders the advance of morning peculiarly cheerless, combined with the object of my walk, to visit the death-bed of a presumptuous sinner, to endeavour, almost against my own conviction, to infuse a hope into the heart of a dying reprobate—a drunkard, but too probably perishing under the consequences of some mad fit of intoxication; all these circumstances united served to enhance the gloom and solemnity of my feelings, as I silently followed my little guide, who with quick steps traversed the uneven pavement of the main street. After a walk of about five minutes she turned off into a narrow lane, of that obscure and comfortless class which are to be found in almost all small old fashioned towns, chill without ventilation, reeking with all manner of offensive effluviæ, dingy, smoky, sickly and pent-up buildings, frequently not only in a wretched but in a dangerous condition.

"Your father has changed his abode since I last visited him, and, I am afraid, much for the worse," said I.

"Indeed he has, sir, but we must not complain," replied she; "we have to thank God that we have lodging and food, though it's poor enough, it is, your honour."

Poor child! thought I, how many an older head might learn wisdom from thee—how many a luxurious philosopher, who is skilled to preach but not to suffer, might not thy patient words put to the blush! The manner and language of this child were alike above her years and station; and, indeed, in all cases in which the cares and sorrows of life have anticipated their usual date, and have fallen, as they sometimes do, with melancholy prematurity to the lot of childhood, I have observed the result to have proved uniformly the same. A young mind, to which joy and indulgence have been strangers, and to which suffering and self-denial have been familiarised from the first, acquires a solidity and an elevation which no other discipline could have bestowed, and which, in the present case, communicated a striking but mournful peculiarity to the manners, even to the voice of the child. We paused before a narrow, crazy door, which she opened by means of a latch, and we forthwith began to ascend the steep and broken stairs, which led upwards to the sick man's room. As we mounted flight after flight towards the garret floor, I heard more and more distinctly the hurried talking of many voices. I could also distinguish the low sobbing of a female. On arriving upon the uppermost lobby, these sounds became fully audible.

"This way, your honor," said my little conductress, at the same time pushing open a door of patched and half rotten plank, she admitted me into the squalid chamber of death and misery. But one candle, held in the fingers of a scared and haggard-looking child, was burning in the room, and that so dim that all was twilight or darkness except within its immediate influence. The general obscurity, however, served to throw into prominent and startling relief the death-bed and its occupant. The light was nearly approximated to, and fell with horrible clearness upon, the blue and swollen features of the drunkard. I did not think it possible that a human countenance could look so terrific. The lips were black and drawn apart—the teeth were firmly set—the eyes a little unclosed, and nothing but the whites appearing—every feature was fixed and livid, and the whole face wore a ghastly and rigid expression of despairing terror such as I never saw equalled; his hands were crossed upon his breast, and firmly clenched, while, as if to add to the corpse-like effect of the whole, some white cloths, dipped in water, were wound about the forehead and temples. As soon as I could remove my eyes from this horrible spectacle, I observed my friend Dr. D——, one of the most humane of a humane profession, standing by the bed-side. He had been attempting, but unsuccessfully, to bleed the patient, and had now applied his finger to the pulse.

"Is there any hope?" I inquired in a whisper.

A shake of the head was the reply. There was a pause while he continued to hold the wrist; but he waited in vain for the throb of life, it was not there, and when he let go the hand it fell stiffly back into its former position upon the other.

"The man is dead," said the physician, as he turned from the bed where the terrible figure lay.

Dead! thought I, scarcely venturing to look upon the tremendous and revolting spectacle—dead! without an hour for repentance, even a moment for reflection—dead! without the rites which even the best should have. Is there a hope for him? The glaring eyeball, the grinning mouth, the distorted brow—that unutterable look in which a painter would have sought to embody the fixed despair of the nethermost hell—these were my answer.

The poor wife sat at a little distance, crying as if her heart would break—the younger children clustered round the bed, looking, with wondering curiosity, upon the form of death, never seen before. When the first tumult of uncontrollable sorrow had passed away, availing myself of the solemnity and impressiveness of the scene, I desired the heart-stricken family to accompany me in prayer, and all knelt down, while I solemnly and fervently repeated some of those prayers which appeared most applicable to the occasion. I employed myself thus in a manner which, I trusted, was not unprofitable, at least to the living, for about ten minutes, and having accomplished my task, I was the first to arise. I looked upon the poor, sobbing, helpless creatures who knelt so humbly around me, and my heart bled for them. With a natural transition, I turned my eyes from them to the bed in which the body lay, and, great God! what was the revulsion, the horror which I experienced on seeing the corpse-like, terrific thing seated half upright before me—the white cloths, which had been wound about the head, had now partly slipped from their position, and were hanging in grotesque festoons about the face and shoulders, while the distorted eyes leered from amid them—

> "A sight to dream of, not to tell."

I stood actually rivetted to the spot. The figure nodded its head and lifted its arm, I thought with a menacing gesture. A thousand confused and horrible thoughts at once rushed upon my mind. I had often read that the body of a presumptuous sinner, who, during life, had been the willing creature of every satanic impulse, after the human tenant had deserted it, had been known to become the horrible sport of demoniac possession. I was roused from the stupefaction of terror in which I stood, by the piercing scream of the mother, who now, for the first time, perceived the change which had taken place. She rushed towards the bed, but, stunned by the shock and overcome by the conflict of violent emotions, before she reached it, she fell prostrate upon the floor. I am perfectly convinced that had I not been startled from the torpidity of horror in which I was bound, by some powerful and arousing stimulant, I should have gazed upon this unearthly apparition until I had fairly lost my senses. As it was, however, the spell was broken, superstition gave way to reason: the man whom all believed to have been actually dead, was living! Dr. D—— was instantly standing by the bedside, and, upon examination, he found that a sudden and copious flow of blood had taken place from the wound which the lancet had left, and this, no doubt, had effected his sudden and almost preternatural restoration to an existence from which all thought he had been for ever removed. The man was still speechless, but he seemed to understand the physician when he forbid his repeating the painful and fruitless attempts which he made to articulate, and he at once resigned himself quietly into his hands.

I left the patient with leeches upon his temples, and bleeding freely—apparently with little of the drowsiness which accompanies apoplexy; indeed, Dr. D—— told me that he had never before witnessed a seizure which seemed to combine the symptoms of so many kinds, and yet which belonged to none of the recognised classes; it certainly was not apoplexy, catalipsy, nor *delirium tremens*, and yet it seemed, in some degree, to partake of the properties of all—it was strange, but stranger things are coming.

During two or three days Dr. D—— would not allow his patient to converse in a manner which could excite or exhaust him, with any one; he suffered him merely, as briefly as possible, to express his immediate wants, and it was not until the fourth day after my early visit, the particulars of which I have just detailed, that it was thought expedient that I should see him, and then only because it appeared that his extreme importunity and impatience were likely to retard his recovery more than the mere exhaustion attendant upon a short conversation could possibly do; perhaps, too, my friend entertained some hope that if by holy confession his patient's bosom were eased of the perilous stuff, which, no doubt, oppressed it, his recovery would be more assured and rapid. It was, then, as I have said, upon the fourth day after my first professional call, that I found myself once more in the dreary chamber of want and sickness. The man was in bed, and appeared low and restless. On my entering the room he raised himself in the bed, and muttered twice or thrice—"Thank God! thank God." I signed to those of his family who stood by, to leave the room, and took a chair beside the bed. So soon as we were alone, he said, rather doggedly—"There's no use now in telling me of the sinfulness of bad ways—I know it all—I know where they lead to—I seen everything about it with my own eyesight, as plain as I see you." He rolled himself in the bed, as if to hide his face in the clothes, and then suddenly raising himself, he exclaimed with startling vehemence—"Look, sir, there is no use in mincing the matter; I'm blasted with the fires of hell; I have been in hell; what do you think of that?—in hell—I'm lost for ever—I have not a chance—I am damned already—damned—damned——." The end of this sentence he actually shouted; his vehemence was perfectly terrific; he threw himself back, and laughed, and sobbed hysterically. I poured some water into a tea-cup, and gave it to him. After he had swallowed it, I told him if he had anything to communicate, to do so as briefly as he could, and in a manner as little agitating to himself as possible; threatening at the same time, though I had no intention of doing so, to leave him at once, in case he again gave way to such passionate excitement. "It's only foolishness," he continued, "for me to try to thank you for coming to such a villain as myself at all; it's no use for me to wish good to you, or to bless you; for such as me has no blessings to give." I told him that I had but done my duty, and urged him to proceed to the matter which weighed upon his mind; he then spoke nearly as follows:—I came in drunk on Friday night last, and got to my bed here, I don't remember how; sometime in the night, it seemed to me, I wakened, and feeling unasy in myself, I got up out of the bed. I wanted the fresh air, but I would not make a noise to open the window, for fear I'd waken the crathurs. It was very dark, and throublesome to find the door; but at last I did get it, and I groped my way out, and went down as asy as I could. I felt quite sober, and I counted the steps one after another, as I was going down, that I might not stumble at the bottom. When I came to the first landing-place, God be about us always! the floor of it sunk under me, and I went down, down, down, till the senses almost left me. I do not know how long I was falling, but it seemed to me a great while. When I came rightly to myself at last, I was sitting at a great table, near the top of it; and I could not see the end of it, if it had any, it was so far off; and there was men beyond reckoning, sitting down, all along by it, at each side, as far as I could see at all. I did not know at first was it in the open air; but there was a close smothering feel in it, that was not natural, and there was a kind of light that my eyesight never saw before, red and unsteady, and I did not see for a long time where it was coming from, until I looked straight up, and then I seen that it came from great balls of blood-coloured fire, that were rolling high over head with a sort of rushing, trembling sound, and I perceived that they shone on the ribs of a great roof of rock that was arched overhead instead of the sky. When I seen this, scarce knowing what I did, I got up, and I said, 'I have no right to be here; I must go,' and the man that was sitting at my left hand, only smiled, and said, 'sit down again, you can *never* leave this place,' and his voice was weaker than any child's voice I ever heerd, and when he was done speaking he smiled again. Then I spoke out very loud and bold, and I said—'in the name of God, let me out of this bad place.' And there was a great man, that I did not see before, sitting at the end of the table that I was near, and he was taller than twelve men, and his face was very proud and terrible to look at, and he stood up and stretched out his hand before him, and when he stood up, all that was there, great and small, bowed down with a sighing sound, and a dread came on my heart, and he looked at me, and I could not speak. I felt I was his own, to do what he liked with, for I knew at once who he was, and he said, 'if you promise to return, you may depart for a season;' and the voice he spoke with was terrible and mournful, and the echoes of it went rolling and swelling down the endless cave, and mixing with the trembling of the fire overhead; so that, when he sate down, there was a sound after him, all through the place like the roaring of a furnace, and I said, with all the strength I had, 'I promise to come back; in God's name let me go,' and with that I lost the sight and the hearing of all that was there, and when my senses came to me again, I was sitting in the bed with the blood all over me, and you and the rest praying around the room." Here he paused and wiped away the chill drops of horror which hung upon his forehead.

I remained silent for some moments. The vision which he had just described struck my imagination not a little, for this was long before Vatheck and the "Hall of Eblis" had delighted the world; and the description which he gave had, as I received it, all the attractions of novelty beside the impressiveness which always belongs to the narration of an *eye-witness*, whether in the body or in the spirit, of the scenes which he describes. There was something, too, in the stern horror with which the man related these things, and in the incongruity of his description, with the vulgarly received notions of the great place of punishment, and of its presiding spirit, which struck my mind with awe, almost with fear. At length he said, with an expression of horrible, imploring earnestness, which I shall never forget—"Well, sir, is there any hope; is there any chance at all? or, is my soul pledged and promised away for ever? is it gone out of my power? must I go back to the place?"

In answering him I had no easy task to perform; for however clear might be my internal conviction of the groundlessness of his fears, and however strong my scepticism respecting the reality of what he had described, I nevertheless felt that his impression to the contrary, and his humility and terror resulting from it, might be made available as no mean engines in the work of his conversion from profligacy, and of his restoration to decent habits, and to religious feeling. I therefore told him that he was to regard his dream rather in the light of a warning than in that of a prophecy; that our salvation depended not upon the word or deed of a moment, but upon the habits of a life; that, in fine, if he at once discarded his idle companions and evil habits, and firmly adhered to a sober, industrious, and religious course of life, the powers of darkness might claim his soul in vain, for that there were higher and firmer pledges than human tongue could utter, which promised salvation to him who should repent and lead a new life.

I left him much comforted, and with a promise to return upon the next day. I did so, and found him much more cheerful, and without any remains of the dogged sullenness which I suppose had arisen from his despair. His promises of amendment were given in that tone of deliberate earnestness, which belongs to deep and solemn determination; and it was with no small delight that I observed, after repeated visits, that his good resolutions, so far from failing, did but gather strength by time; and when I saw that man shake off the idle and debauched companions, whose society had for years formed alike his amusement and his ruin, and revive his long discarded habits of industry and sobriety, I said within myself, there is something more in all this than the operation of an idle dream. One day, sometime after his perfect restoration to health, I was surprised on ascending the stairs, for the purpose of visiting this man, to find him busily employed in nailing down some planks upon the landing place, through which, at the commencement of his mysterious vision, it seemed to him that he had sunk. I perceived at once that he was strengthening the floor with a view to securing himself against such a catastrophe, and could scarcely forbear a smile as I bid "God bless his work."

He perceived my thoughts, I suppose, for he immediately said,

"I can never pass over that floor without trembling. I'd leave this house if I could, but I can't find another lodging in the town so cheap, and I'll not take a better till I've paid off all my debts, please God; but I could not be asy in my mind till I made it as safe as I could. You'll hardly believe me, your honor, that while I'm working, maybe a mile away, my heart is in a flutter the whole way back, with the bare thoughts of the two little steps I have to walk upon this bit of a floor. So it's no wonder, sir, I'd thry to make it sound and firm with any idle timber I have."

I applauded his resolution to pay off his debts, and the steadiness with which he pursued his plans of conscientious economy, and passed on.

Many months elapsed, and still there appeared no alteration in his resolutions of amendment. He was a good workman, and with his better habits he recovered his former extensive and profitable employment. Every thing seemed to promise comfort and respectability. I have little more to add, and that shall be told quickly. I had one evening met Pat Connell, as he returned from his work, and as usual, after a mutual, and on his side respectful salutation, I spoke a few words of encouragement and approval. I left him industrious, active, healthy—when next I saw him, not three days after, he was a corpse. The circumstances which marked the event of his death were somewhat strange—I might say fearful. The unfortunate man had accidentally met an early friend, just returned, after a long absence, and in a moment of excitement, forgetting every thing in the warmth of his joy, he yielded to his urgent invitation to accompany him into a public house, which lay close by the spot where the encounter had taken place. Connell, however, previously to entering the room, had announced his determination to take nothing more than the strictest temperance would warrant. But oh! who can describe the inveterate tenacity with which a drunkard's habits cling to him through life. He may repent—he may reform—he may look with actual abhorrence upon his past profligacy; but amid all this reformation and compunction, who can tell the moment in which the base and ruinous propensity may not recur, triumphing over resolution, remorse, shame, everything, and prostrating its victim once more in all that is destructive and revolting in that fatal vice.

The wretched man left the place in a state of utter intoxication. He was brought home nearly insensible, and placed in his bed, where he lay in the deep calm lethargy of drunkenness. The younger part of the family retired to rest much after their usual hour; but the poor wife remained up sitting by the fire, too much grieved and shocked at the recurrence of what she had so little expected, to settle to rest; fatigue, however, at length overcame her, and she sunk gradually into an uneasy slumber. She could not tell how long she had remained in this state, when she awakened, and immediately on opening her eyes, she perceived by the faint red light of the smouldering turf embers, two persons, one of whom she recognized as her husband, noiselessly gliding out of the room.

"Pat, darling, where are you going?" said she. There was no answer—the door closed after them; but in a moment she was startled and terrified by a loud and heavy crash, as if some ponderous body had been hurled down the stair. Much alarmed, she started up, and going to the head of the staircase, she called repeatedly upon her husband, but in vain. She returned to the room, and with the assistance of her daughter, whom I had occasion to mention before, she succeeded in finding and lighting a candle, with which she hurried again to the head of the staircase. At the bottom lay what seemed to be a bundle of clothes, heaped together, motionless, lifeless—it was her husband. In going down the stairs, for what purpose can never now be known, he had fallen helplessly and violently to the bottom, and coming head foremost, the spine at the neck had been dislocated by the shock, and instant death must have ensued. The body lay upon that landing-place to which his dream had referred. It is scarcely worth endeavouring to clear up a single point in a narrative where all is mystery; yet I could not help suspecting that the second figure which had been seen in the room by Connell's wife on the night of his death, might have been no other than his own shadow. I suggested this solution of the difficulty; but she told me that the unknown person had been considerably in advance of the other, and on reaching the door, had turned back as if to communicate something to his companion—it was then a mystery. Was the dream verified?—whither had the disembodied spirit sped?—who can say? We know not. But I left the house of death that day in a state of horror which I could not describe. It seemed to me that I was scarce awake. I heard and saw every thing as if under the spell of a nightmare. The coincidence was terrible.

PASSAGE IN THE SECRET HISTORY OF AN IRISH COUNTESS.

BEING THE FIFTH EXTRACT FROM THE LEGACY OF THE LATE FRANCIS PURCELL, P. P. OF DRUMCOOLAGH.

The following paper is written in a female hand, and was no doubt communicated to my much regretted friend, by the lady whose early history it serves to illustrate, the Countess D——. She is no more—she long since died, a childless and a widowed wife, and, as her letter sadly predicts, none survive to whom the publication of this narrative can prove "injurious, or even painful." Strange! two powerful and wealthy families, *that* in which she was born, and that into which she had married, have ceased to be—they are utterly extinct. To those who know any thing of the history of Irish families, as they were less than a century ago, the facts contained in this paper will at once suggest *the names* of the principal actors; and to others their publication would be useless; to us, possibly, if not probably, injurious. I have, therefore, altered such of the names as might, if stated, lead at once to detection; others, belonging to minor characters in the strange story, I have left untouched.

My dear friend—You have asked me to furnish you with a detail of the strange events which marked my early history, and I have, without hesitation, applied myself to the task, knowing that while I live, a kind consideration for my feelings will prevent your giving publicity to the statement; and conscious that, when I am no more, there will not survive one to whom the narrative can prove injurious, or even painful.

My mother died when I was quite an infant, and of her I have no recollection, even the faintest. By her death, my education and habits were left solely to the guidance of my surviving parent; and, as far as a stern attention to my religious instruction, and an active anxiety evinced by his procuring for me the best masters to perfect me in those accomplishments which my station and wealth might seem to require, could avail, he amply discharged the task. My father was what is called an oddity, and his treatment of me, though uniformly kind, flowed less from affection and tenderness, than from a sense of obligation and duty. Indeed, I seldom even spoke to him except at meal times, and then his manner was silent and abrupt; his leisure hours, which were many, were passed either in his study or in solitary walks; in short, he seemed to take no further interest in my happiness or improvement than a conscientious regard to the discharge of his own duty would seem to claim. Shortly before my birth a circumstance had occurred which had contributed much to form and to confirm my father's secluded habits—it was the fact that a suspicion of *murder* had fallen upon his younger brother, though not sufficiently definite to lead to an indictment, yet strong enough to ruin him in public opinion. This disgraceful and dreadful doubt cast upon the family name, my father felt deeply and bitterly, and not the less so that he himself was thoroughly convinced of his brother's innocence; the sincerity and strength of this impression he shortly afterwards proved in a manner which produced the dark events which follow. Before, however, I enter upon the statement of them, I ought to relate the circumstances which had awakened the suspicion; inasmuch as they are in themselves somewhat curious, and, in their effects, most intimately connected with my after-history.

My uncle, Sir Arthur T——n, was a gay and extravagant man, and, among other vices, was ruinously addicted to gaming; this unfortunate propensity, even after his fortune had suffered so severely as to render inevitable a reduction in his expenses by no means inconsiderable, nevertheless continued to actuate him, nearly to the exclusion of all other pursuits; he was, however, a proud, or rather a vain man, and could not bear to make the diminution of his income a matter of gratulation and triumph to those with whom he had hitherto competed, and the consequence was, that he frequented no longer the expensive haunts of dissipation, and retired from the gay world, leaving his coterie to discover his reasons, as best they might. He did not, however, forego his favourite vice, for, though he could not worship his great divinity in the costly temples where it was formerly his wont to take his stand, yet he found it very possible to bring about him a sufficient number of the votaries of chance to answer all his ends. The consequence was, that Carrickleigh, which was the name of my uncle's residence, was never without one or more of such visitors as I have described. It happened that upon one occasion he was visited by one Hugh Tisdall, a gentleman of loose habits, but of considerable wealth, and who had, in early youth, travelled with my uncle upon the continent; the period of this visit was winter, and, consequently, the house was nearly deserted excepting by its regular inmates; it was, therefore, highly acceptable, particularly as my uncle was aware that his visitor's tastes accorded exactly with his own. Both parties seemed determined to avail themselves of their suitability during the brief stay which Mr. Tisdall had promised; the consequence was, that they shut themselves up in Sir Arthur's private room, for nearly all the day and the greater part of the night, during the space of nearly a week, at the end of which the servant, having one morning, as usual, knocked at Mr. Tisdall's bed-room door repeatedly, received no answer, and, upon attempting to enter, found that it was locked; this appeared suspicious, and the inmates of the house, having been alarmed, the door was forced open, and, on proceeding to the bed, they found the body of its occupant perfectly lifeless, and hanging half way out, the head downwards, and near the floor; one deep wound had been inflicted upon the temple, apparently with some blunt instrument which had penetrated the brain, and another blow, less effective, probably the first aimed, had grazed the head, removing some of the scalp, but leaving the skull untouched; the door had been double locked upon the *inside*, in evidence of which the key still lay where it had been placed in the lock. The window, though not secured on the interior, was closed; a circumstance not a little puzzling, as it afforded the only other mode of escape from the room; it looked out, too, upon a kind of court-yard, round which the old buildings stood, formerly accessible by a narrow door-way and passage lying in the oldest side of the quadrangle, but which had since been built up, so as to preclude all ingress or egress; the room was also upon the second story, and the height of the window considerable; near the bed were found a pair of razors belonging to the murdered man, one of them upon the ground, and both of them open. The weapon which had inflicted the mortal wound was not to be found in the room, nor were any footsteps or other traces of the murderer discoverable. At the suggestion of Sir Arthur himself, a coroner was instantly summoned to attend, and an inquest was held; nothing, however, in any degree conclusive was elicited; the walls, ceiling, and floor of the room were carefully examined, in order to ascertain whether they contained a trap-door or other concealed mode of entrance—but no such thing appeared. Such was the minuteness of investigation employed, that, although the grate had contained a large fire during the night, they proceeded to examine even the very chimney, in order to discover whether escape by it was possible; but this attempt, too, was fruitless, for the chimney, built in the old fashion, rose in a perfectly perpendicular line from the hearth, to a height of nearly fourteen feet above the roof, affording in its interior scarcely the possibility of ascent, the flue being smoothly plastered, and sloping towards the top, like an inverted funnel, promising, too, even if the summit were attained, owing to its great height, but a precarious descent upon the sharp and steep-ridged roof; the ashes, too, which lay in the grate, and the soot, as far as it could be seen, were undisturbed, a circumstance almost conclusive of the question. Sir Arthur was of course examined; his evidence was given with clearness and unreserve, which seemed calculated to silence all suspicion; he stated that, up to the day and night immediately preceding the catastrophe, he had lost to a heavy amount, but that, at their last sitting, he had not only won back his original loss, but upwards of four thousand pounds in addition; in evidence of which he produced an acknowledgment of debt to that amount, in the hand-writing of the deceased, and bearing the date of the fatal night; he had mentioned the circumstance to his lady, and in presence of some of the domestics; which statement was supported by *their* respective evidence. One of the jury shrewdly observed, that the circumstance of Mr. Tisdall's having sustained so heavy a loss might have suggested to some ill-minded persons accidentally hearing it, the plan of robbing him, after having murdered him in such a manner as might make it appear that he had committed suicide; a supposition which was strongly supported by the razors having been found thus displaced, and removed from their case; two persons had probably been engaged in the attempt, one watching by the sleeping man, and ready to strike him in case of his awakening suddenly, while the other was procuring the razors and employed in inflicting the fatal gash, so as to make it appear to have been the act of the murdered man himself; it was said that while the juror was making this suggestion, Sir Arthur changed colour. Nothing, however, like legal evidence appeared against him, and the consequence was, that the verdict was found against a person or persons unknown, and for some time the matter was suffered to rest, until, after about five months, my father received a letter from a person signing himself Andrew Collis, and representing himself to be the cousin of the deceased; this letter stated that Sir Arthur was likely to incur not merely suspicion, but personal risk, unless he could account for certain circumstances connected with the recent murder, and contained a copy of a letter written by the deceased, and bearing date, the day of the week, and of the month, upon the night of which the deed of blood had been perpetrated. Tisdall's note ran as follows:—

"Dear Collis—I have had sharp work with Sir Arthur; he tried some of his stale tricks, but soon found that *I* was Yorkshire too—it would not do—you understand me—we went to the work like good ones, head, heart and soul; and, in fact, since I came here, I have lost no time. I am rather fagged, but I am sure to be well paid for my hardship; I never want sleep so long as I can have the music of a dice-box, and wherewithal to pay the piper. As I told you, he tried some of his queer turns, but I foiled him like a man, and, in return, gave him more than he could relish of the genuine *dead knowledge*. In short, I have plucked the old baronet, as never baronet was plucked before; I have scarce left him the stump of a quill; I have got promissory notes in his hand to the amount of——if you like round numbers, say, thirty thousand pounds, safely deposited in my portable strong box, alias double-clasped pocket-book. I leave this ruinous old rat-hole early on to-morrow, for two reasons—first, I do not want to play with Sir Arthur deeper than I think his security, that is, his money, or his money's worth, would warrant—and, secondly, because I am safer a hundred miles from Sir Arthur, than in the house with him; look you, my worthy, I tell you this between ourselves—I may be wrong, but, by G—, I am as sure as that I am now living, that Sir A—— attempted to poison me last night; so much for old friendship on both sides. When I won the last stake, a heavy one enough, my friend leant his forehead upon his hands, and you'll laugh when I tell you, that his head literally smoked like a hot dumpling; I do not know whether his agitation was produced by the plan which he had against me, or by his having lost so heavily; though it must be allowed that he had reason to be a little funked, whichever way his thoughts went; but he pulled the bell, and ordered two bottles of Champagne. While the fellow was bringing them he drew out a promissory note to the full amount, which he signed, and, as the man came in with the bottles and glasses, he desired him to be off; he filled out a glass for me, and, while he thought my eyes were off, for I was putting up his note at the time, he dropped something slyly into it, no doubt to sweeten it; but I saw it all, and, when he handed it to me, I said, with an emphasis which he might or might not understand, 'there is some sediment in this, I'll not drink it.' 'Is there?' said he, and at the same time snatched it from my hand and threw it into the fire. What do you think of that? have I not a tender chicken to manage? Win or lose, I will not play beyond five thousand to-night, and to-morrow sees me safe out of the reach of Sir Arthur's Champagne. So, all things considered, I think you must allow that you are not the last who have found a knowing boy in yours to command, HUGH TISDALL."

Of the authenticity of this document, I never heard my father express a doubt; and, I am satisfied that, owing to his strong conviction in favor of his brother, he would not have admitted it without sufficient inquiry, inasmuch as it tended to confirm the suspicions which already existed to his prejudice. Now, the only point in this letter which made strongly against my uncle, was the mention of the "double-clasped pocket-book," as the receptacle of the papers likely to involve him, for this pocket-book was not forthcoming, nor any where to be found, nor had any papers referring to his gaming transactions been found upon the dead man; however, whatever might have been the original intention of this Collis, neither my uncle or my father ever heard more of him; but he published the letter in Faulkner's newspaper, which was shortly afterwards made the vehicle of a much more mysterious attack; the passage in that periodical to which I allude, occurred about four years afterwards, and while the fatal occurrence was still fresh in public recollection; it commenced by a rambling preface, stating that "a *certain person* whom *certain* persons thought to be dead, was not so, but living, and in full possession of his memory, and moreover, ready and able to make *great* delinquents tremble;" it then went on to describe the murder, without, however mentioning names; and in doing so, it entered into minute and circumstantial particulars of which none but an *eye-witness* could have been possessed, and by implications almost too unequivocal to be regarded in the light of insinuation, to involve the "*titled gambler*" in the guilt of the transaction. My father at once urged Sir Arthur to proceed against the paper in an action of libel, but he would not hear of it, nor consent to my father's taking any legal steps whatever in the matter. My father, however, wrote in a threatening tone to Faulkner, demanding a surrender of the author of the obnoxious article; the answer to this application is still in my possession, and is penned in an apologetic tone: it states that the manuscript had been handed in, paid for, and inserted as an advertisement, without sufficient inquiry, or any knowledge as to whom it referred. No step, however, was taken to clear my uncle's character in the judgment of the public; and, as he immediately sold a small property, the application of the proceeds of which were known to none, he was said to have disposed of it to enable himself to buy off the threatened information; however the truth might have been, it is certain that no charges respecting the mysterious murder were afterwards publicly made against my uncle, and, as far as external disturbances were concerned, he enjoyed henceforward perfect security and quiet. A deep and lasting impression, however, had been made upon the public mind, and Sir Arthur T——n was no longer visited or noticed by the gentry and aristocracy of the county, whose attentions and courtesies he had hitherto received. He accordingly affected to despise these enjoyments which he could not procure, and shunned even that society which he might have commanded. This is all that I need recapitulate of my uncle's history, and I now recur to my own. Although my father had never, within my recollection, visited, or been visited by my uncle, each being of sedentary, procrastinating, and secluded habits, and their respective residences being very far apart—the one lying in the county of Galway, the other in that of Cork—he was strongly attached to his brother, and evinced his affection by an active correspondence, and by deeply and proudly resenting that neglect which had marked Sir Arthur as unfit to mix in society. When I was about eighteen years of age, my father, whose health had been gradually declining, died, leaving me in heart wretched and desolate, and owing to his previous seclusion, with few acquaintances, and almost no friends. The provisions of his will were curious, and when I was sufficiently come to myself to listen to, or comprehend them, surprised me not a little: all his vast property was left to me, and to the heirs of my body, for ever; and, in default of such heirs, it was to go after my death to my uncle, Sir Arthur, without any entail. At the same time, the will appointed him my guardian, desiring that I might be received within his house, and reside with his family, and under his care, during the term of my minority; and in consideration of the increased expense consequent upon such an arrangement, a handsome annuity was allotted to him during the term of my proposed residence. The object of this last provision I at once understood; my father desired, by making it the direct, apparent interest of Sir Arthur that I should die without issue, while at the same time he placed me wholly in his power, to prove to the world, how great and unshaken was his confidence in his brother's innocence and honour, and also to afford him an opportunity of showing that this mark of confidence was not unworthily bestowed. It was a strange, perhaps an idle scheme, but as I had been always brought up in the habit of considering my uncle as a deeply injured man, and had been taught almost as a part of my religion, to regard him as the very soul of honour, I felt no further uneasiness respecting the arrangement, than that likely to result to a timid girl, of secluded habits, from the immediate prospect of taking up her abode for the first time in her life among total strangers; previous to leaving my home, which I felt I should do with a heavy heart, I received a most tender and affectionate letter from my uncle, calculated, if any thing could do so, to remove the bitterness of parting from scenes familiar and dear from my earliest childhood, and in some degree to reconcile me to the measure. It was upon a fine autumn that I approached the old domain of Carrickleigh. I shall not soon forget the impression of sadness and of gloom which all that I saw produced upon my mind; the sunbeams were falling with a rich and melancholy tint upon the fine old trees, which stood in lordly groups, casting their long, sweeping shadows over rock and sward; there was an air of neglect and decay about the spot, which amounted almost to desolation, the symptoms of this increased in number as we approached the building itself, near which the ground had been originally more artificially and carefully cultivated than elsewhere, and whose neglect consequently more immediately and strikingly betrayed itself. As we proceeded, the road wound near the beds of what had been formerly two fish-ponds, which were now nothing more than stagnant swamps, overgrown with rank weeds, and here and there encroached upon by the straggling underwood; the avenue itself was much broken; and in many places the stones were almost concealed by grass and nettles; the loose stone walls which had here and there intersected the broad park, were, in many places, broken down, so as no longer to answer their original purpose as fences; piers were now and then to be seen, but the gates were gone; and, to add to the general air of dilapidation, some huge trunks were lying scattered through the venerable old trees, either the work of the winter storms, or perhaps the victims of some extensive but desultory scheme of denudation, which the projector had not capital or perseverance to carry into full effect. After the carriage had travelled a mile of this avenue, we reached the summit of rather an abrupt eminence, one of the many which added to the picturesqueness, if not to the convenience of this rude passage; from the top of this ridge the grey walls of Carrickleigh were visible, rising at a small distance in front, and darkened by the hoary wood which crowded around them; it was a quadrangular building of considerable extent, and the front which lay towards us, and in which the great entrance was placed, bore unequivocal marks of antiquity; the time-worn, solemn aspect of the old building, the ruinous and deserted appearance of the whole place, and the associations which connected it with a dark page in the history of my family, combined to depress spirits already predisposed for the reception of sombre and dejecting impressions. When the carriage drew up in the grass-grown court-yard before the hall-door, two lazy-looking men, whose appearance well accorded with that of the place which they tenanted, alarmed by the obstreperous barking of a great chained dog, ran out from some half ruinous out-houses, and took charge of the horses; the hall-door stood open, and I entered a gloomy and imperfectly lighted apartment, and found no one within; however, I had not long to wait in this awkward predicament, for before my luggage had been deposited in the house, indeed, before I had well removed my cloak and other muffles, so as to enable me to look around, a young girl ran lightly into the hall, and kissing me heartily, and somewhat boisterously exclaimed, "my dear cousin, my dear Margaret—I am so delighted—so out of breath, we did not expect you till ten o'clock; my father is somewhere about the place, he must be close at hand. James—Corney—run out and tell your master—my brother is seldom at home, at least at any reasonable hour—you must be so tired—so fatigued—let me show you to your room—see that Lady Margaret's luggage is all brought up—you must lie down and rest yourself—Deborah bring some coffee—up these stairs; we are so delighted to see you—you cannot think how lonely I have been—how steep these stairs are, are not they? I am so glad you are come—I could hardly bring myself to believe that you were really coming—how good of you, dear Lady Margaret." There was real good-nature and delight in my cousin's greeting, and a kind of constitutional confidence of manner which placed me at once at ease, and made me feel immediately upon terms of intimacy with her. The room into which she ushered me, although partaking in the general air of decay which pervaded the mansion and all about it, had, nevertheless, been fitted up with evident attention to comfort, and even with some dingy attempt at luxury; but what pleased me most was that it opened, by a second door, upon a lobby which communicated with my fair cousin's apartment; a circumstance which divested the room, in my eyes, of the air of solitude and sadness which would otherwise have characterized it, to a degree almost painful to one so dejected in spirits as I was. After such arrangements as I found necessary were completed, we both went down to the parlour, a large wainscoated room, hung round with grim old portraits, and as I was not sorry to see, containing, in its ample grate, a large and cheerful fire. Here my cousin had leisure to talk more at her ease; and from her I learned something of the manners and the habits of the two remaining members of her family, whom I had not yet seen. On my arrival I had known nothing of the family among whom I was come to reside, except that it consisted of three individuals, my uncle, and his son and daughter, Lady T——n having been long dead; in addition to this very scanty stock of information, I shortly learned from my communicative companion, that my uncle was, as I had suspected, completely retired in his habits, and besides that, having been so far back as she could well recollect, always rather strict, as reformed rakes frequently become, he had latterly been growing more gloomily and sternly religious than heretofore. Her account of her brother was far less favorable, though she did not say any thing directly to his disadvantage. From all that I could gather from her, I was led to suppose that he was a specimen of the idle, coarse-mannered, profligate, low-minded "*squirearchy*"—a result which might naturally have flowed from the circumstance of his being, as it were, outlawed from society, and driven for companionship to grades below his own—enjoying, too, the dangerous prerogative of spending much money. However, you may easily suppose that I found nothing in my cousin's communication, fully to bear me out in so very decided a conclusion. I awaited the arrival of my uncle, which was every moment to be expected, with feelings half of alarm, half of curiosity—a sensation which I have often since experienced, though to a less degree, when upon the point of standing for the first time in the presence of one of whom I have long been in the habit of hearing or thinking with interest. It was, therefore, with some little perturbation that I heard, first a slight bustle at the outer door, then a slow step traverse the hall, and finally witnessed the door open, and my uncle enter the room. He was a striking looking man—from peculiarities both of person and of garb, the whole effect of his appearance amounted to extreme singularity. He was tall, and when young his figure must have been strikingly elegant; as it was, however, its effect was marred by a very decided stoop; his dress was of a sober colour, and in fashion anterior to any thing which I could remember. It was, however, handsome, and by no means carelessly put on; but what completed the singularity of his appearance was his uncut, white hair, which hung in long, but not at all neglected curls, even so far as his shoulders, and which, combined with his regularly classic features, and fine dark eyes, to bestow upon him an air of venerable dignity and pride, which I have never seen equalled elsewhere. I rose as he entered, and met him about the middle of the room; he kissed my cheek and both my hands, saying—

"You are most welcome, dear child, as welcome as the command of this poor place and all that it contains can make you. I am most rejoiced to see you—truly rejoiced. I trust that you are not much fatigued—pray be seated again." He led me to my chair, and continued, "I am glad to perceive you have made acquaintance with Emily already; I see, in your being thus brought together, the foundation of a lasting friendship. You are both innocent, and both young. God bless you—God bless you, and make you all that I could wish."

He raised his eyes, and remained for a few moments silent, as if in secret prayer. I felt that it was impossible that this man, with feelings so quick, so warm, so tender, could be the wretch that public opinion had represented him to be. I was more than ever convinced of his innocence. His manner was, or appeared to me, most fascinating—there was a mingled kindness and courtesy in it which seemed to speak benevolence itself—it was a manner which I felt cold art could never have taught—it owed most of its charm to its appearing to emanate directly from the heart—it must be a genuine index of the owner's mind. So I thought. My uncle having given me fully to understand that I was most welcome, and might command whatever was his own, pressed me to take some refreshment; and on my refusing, he observed that previously to bidding me good night, he had one duty further to perform, one in whose observance he was convinced I would cheerfully acquiesce. He then proceeded to read a chapter from the Bible; after which he took his leave with the same affectionate kindness with which he had greeted me, having repeated his desire that I should consider every thing in his house as altogether at my disposal. It is needless to say that I was much pleased with my uncle—it was impossible to avoid being so; and I could not help saying to myself, if such a man as this is not safe from the assaults of slander, who is? I felt much happier than I had done since my father's death, and enjoyed that night the first refreshing sleep which had visited me since that event. My curiosity respecting my male cousin did not long remain unsatisfied—he appeared upon the next day at dinner. His manners, though not so coarse as I had expected, were exceedingly disagreeable; there was an assurance and a forwardness for which I was not prepared; there was less of the vulgarity of manner, and almost more of that of the mind, than I had anticipated. I felt quite uncomfortable in his presence; there was just that confidence in his look and tone, which would read encouragement even in mere toleration; and I felt more disgusted and annoyed at the coarse and extravagant compliments which he was pleased from time to time to pay me, than perhaps the extent of the atrocity might fully have warranted. It was, however, one consolation that he did not often appear, being much engrossed by pursuits about which I neither knew nor cared any thing; but when he did appear, his attentions, either with a view to his amusement, or to some more serious advantage, were so obviously and perseveringly directed to me, that young and inexperienced as I was, even *I* could not be ignorant of his preference. I felt more provoked by this odious persecution than I can express, and discouraged him with so much vigour, that I employed even rudeness to convince him that his assiduities were unwelcome—but all in vain.

This had gone on for nearly a twelvemonth to my infinite annoyance, when one day as I was sitting at some needlework with my companion Emily, as was my habit, in the parlour, the door opened, and my cousin Edward entered the room. There was something, I thought, odd in his manner—a kind of struggle between shame and impudence—a kind of flurry and ambiguity which made him appear, if possible, more than ordinarily disagreeable.

"Your servant, ladies," he said, seating himself at the same time; "sorry to spoil your *tete-a-tete;* but never mind, I'll only take Emily's place for a minute or two, and then we part for a while, fair cousin. Emily, my father wants you in the corner turret—no shilly, shally, he's in a hurry." She hesitated, "be off—tramp, march," he exclaimed, in a tone which the poor girl dared not disobey.

She left the room, and Edward followed her to the door. He stood there for a minute or two, as if reflecting what he should say, perhaps satisfying himself that no one was within hearing in the hall. At length he turned about, having closed the door as if carelessly with his foot, and advancing slowly, as if in deep thought, he took his seat at the side of the table opposite to mine. There was a brief interval of silence, after which he said—

"I imagine that you have a shrewd suspicion of the object of my early visit; but I suppose I must go into particulars. Must I?"

"I have no conception," I replied, "what your object may be."

"Well, well," said he, becoming more at his ease as he proceeded, "it may be told in a few words. You know that it is totally impossible, quite out of the question, that an off-hand young fellow like me, and a good-looking girl like yourself, could meet continually as you and I have done, without an attachment—a liking growing up on one side or other—in short, I think I have let you know as plain as if I spoke it, that I have been in love with you, almost from the first time I saw you." He paused, but I was too much horrified to speak. He interpreted my silence favorably. "I can tell you," he continued, "I'm reckoned rather hard to please, and very hard to *hit.* I can't say when I was taken with a girl before, so you see fortune reserved me ——"

Here the odious wretch wound his arm round my waist: the action at once restored me to utterance, and with the most indignant vehemence I released myself from his hold, and at the same time said—

"I have not been insensible, sir, of your most disagreeable attentions—they have long been a source of much annoyance to me; and you must be aware that I have marked my disapprobation, my disgust, as unequivocally as I possibly could, without actual indelicacy."

I paused, almost out of breath from the rapidity with which I had spoken; and without giving him time to renew the conversation, I hastily quitted the room, leaving him in a paroxysm of rage and mortification. As I ascended the stairs, I heard him open the parlour-door with violence, and take two or three rapid strides in the direction in which I was moving. I was now much frightened, and ran the whole way until I reached my room, and having locked the door, I listened breathlessly, but heard no sound. This relieved me for the present; but so much had I been overcome by the agitation and annoyance attendant upon the scene which I had just gone through, that when my cousin Emily knocked at my door, I was weeping in strong hysterics. You will readily conceive my distress, when you reflect upon my strong dislike to my cousin Edward, combined with my youth and extreme inexperience; any proposal of such a nature must have agitated me—but that it should have come from the man whom of all others I most loathed and abhorred, and to whom I had, as clearly as manner could do it, expressed the state of my feelings, was almost too overwhelming to be borne: it was a calamity, too, in which I could not claim the sympathy of my cousin Emily, which had always been extended to me in my minor grievances. Still I hoped that it might not be unattended with good, for I thought that one inevitable and most welcome consequence would result from this painful *eclaircissement,* in the discontinuance of my cousin's odious persecution.

When I arose next morning, it was with the fervent hope that I might never again behold the face, or even hear the name of my cousin Edward; but such a consummation, though devoutly to be wished, was hardly likely to occur. The painful impressions of yesterday were too vivid to be at once erased; and I could not help feeling some dim foreboding of coming annoyance and evil. To expect on my cousin's part any thing like delicacy or consideration for me, was out of the question. I saw that he had set his heart upon my property, and that he was not likely easily to forego such an acquisition—possessing what might have been considered opportunities and facilities almost to compel my compliance. I now keenly felt the unreasonableness of my father's conduct in placing me to reside with a family of all whose members, with one exception, he was wholly ignorant, and I bitterly felt the helplessness of my situation. I determined, however, in case of my cousin's persevering in his addresses, to lay all the particulars before my uncle, although he had never in kindness or intimacy gone a step beyond our first interview, and to throw myself upon his hospitality and his sense of honour for protection against a repetition of such scenes. My cousin's conduct may appear to have been an inadequate cause for such serious uneasiness; but my alarm was caused neither by his acts nor words, but entirely by his manner, which was strange and even intimidating to excess. At the beginning of the yesterday's interview, there was a sort of bullying swagger in his air, which towards the end gave place to the brutal vehemence of an undisguised ruffian—a transition which had tempted me into a belief that he might seek even forcibly to extort from me a consent to his wishes, or by means still more horrible, of which I scarcely dared to trust myself to think, to possess himself of my property.

I was early next day summoned to attend my uncle in his private room, which lay in a corner turret of the old building; and thither I accordingly went, wondering all the way what this unusual measure might prelude. When I entered the room, he did not rise in his usual courteous way to greet me, but simply pointed to a chair opposite to his own—this boded nothing agreeable. I sat down, however, silently waiting until he should open the conversation.

"Lady Margaret," at length he said, in a tone of greater sterness than I thought him capable of using, "I have hitherto spoken to you as a friend, but I have not forgotten that I am also your guardian, and that my authority as such gives me a right to control your conduct. I shall put a question to you, and I expect and will demand a plain, direct answer. Have I rightly been informed that you have contemptuously rejected the suit and hand of my son Edward?"

I stammered forth, with a good deal of trepidation—

"I believe—that is, I have, sir, rejected my cousin's proposals; and my coldness and discouragement might have convinced him that I had determined to do so."

"Madam," replied he, with suppressed, but, as it appeared to me, intense anger, "I have lived long enough to know that *coldness* and discouragement, and such terms, form the common cant of a worthless coquette. You know to the full, as well as I, that *coldness and discouragement* may be so exhibited as to convince their object that he is neither distasteful or indifferent to the person who wears this manner. You know, too, none better, that an affected neglect, when skilfully managed, is amongst the most formidable of the engines which artful beauty can employ. I tell you, madam, that having without one word spoken in discouragement, permitted my son's most marked attentions for a twelvemonth or more, you have no right to dismiss him with no further explanation than demurely telling him that you had always looked coldly upon him, and neither your wealth nor your *ladyship* (there was an emphasis of scorn on the word, which would have become Sir Giles Overreach himself) can warrant you in treating with contempt the affectionate regard of an honest heart."

I was too much shocked at this undisguised attempt to bully me into an acquiescence in the interested and unprincipled plan for their own aggrandisement, which I now perceived my uncle and his son to have deliberately entered into, at once to find strength or collectedness to frame an answer to what he had said. At length I replied with some firmness—

"In all that you have just now said, sir, you have grossly misstated my conduct and motives—your information must have been most incorrect, as far as it regards my conduct towards my cousin; my manner towards him could have conveyed nothing but dislike; and if any thing could have added to the strong aversion which I have long felt towards him, it would be his attempting thus to trick and frighten me into a marriage which he knows to be revolting to me, and which is sought by him only as a means for securing to himself whatever property is mine."

As I said this, I fixed my eyes upon those of my uncle, but he was too old in the *world's ways* to faulter beneath the gaze of more searching eyes than mine; he simply said—

"Are you acquainted with the provisions of your father's will?"

I answered in the affirmative; and he continued—"Then you must be aware that if my son Edward were, which God forbid, the unprincipled, reckless man, you pretend to think him"—(here he spoke very slowly, as if he intended that every word which escaped him, should be registered in my memory, while at the same time the expression of his countenance underwent a gradual but horrible change, and the eyes which he fixed upon me became so darkly vivid, that I almost lost sight of every thing else)—"if he were what you have described him, think you, girl, he could find no briefer means than wedding contracts to gain his ends—'twas but to gripe your slender neck until the breath had stopped, and lands, and lakes, and all were his."

I stood staring at him for many minutes after he had ceased to speak, fascinated by the terrible, serpent-like gaze, until he continued with a welcome change of countenance—

"I will not speak again to you, upon this topic, until one month has passed. You shall have time to consider the relative advantages of the two courses which are open to you. I should be sorry to hurry you to a decision. I am satisfied with having stated my feelings upon the subject, and pointed out to you the path of duty. Remember this day month—not one word sooner."

He then rose, and I left the room, much agitated and exhausted.

This interview, all the circumstances attending it, but most particularly the formidable expression of my uncle's countenance while he talked, though hypothetically, of *murder*, combined to arouse all my worst suspicions of him. I dreaded to look upon the face that had so recently worn the appalling livery of guilt and malignity. I regarded it with the mingled fear and loathing with which one looks upon an object which has tortured them in a night-mare.

In a few days after the interview, the particulars of which I have just detailed, I found a note upon my toilet-table, and on opening it I read as follows:—

"My dear Lady Margaret,—You will be, perhaps, surprised to see a strange face in your room to-day. I have dismissed your Irish maid, and secured a French one to wait upon you—a step rendered necessary by my proposing shortly to visit the continent, with all my family.—Your faithful guardian, ARTHUR T——N."

On inquiry, I found that my faithful attendant was actually gone, and far on her way to the town of Galway; and in her stead there appeared a tall, raw-boned, ill-looking, elderly Frenchwoman, whose sullen and presuming manners seemed to imply that her vocation had never before been that of a lady's-maid. I could not help regarding her as a creature of my uncle's, and therefore to be dreaded, even had she been in no other way suspicious.

Days and weeks passed away, without any, even a momentary doubt upon my part, as to the course to be pursued by me. The allotted period had at length elapsed; the day arrived upon which I was to communicate my decision to my uncle. Although my resolution had never for a moment wavered, I could not shake off the dread of the approaching colloquy; and my heart sunk within me, as I heard the expected summons. I had not seen my cousin Edward since the occurrence of the grand *eclaircissement*; he must have studiously avoided me—I suppose from policy, it could not have been from delicacy. I was prepared for a terrific burst of fury from my uncle, as soon as I should make known my determination; and I not unreasonably feared that some act of violence or of intimidation would next be resorted to. Filled with these dreary forebodings, I fearfully opened the study door, and the next minute I stood in my uncle's presence. He received me with a politeness which I dreaded, as arguing a favorable anticipation respecting the answer which I was to give; and after some slight delay, he began by saying—

"It will be a relief to both of us, I believe, to bring this conversation as soon as possible to an issue. You will excuse me, then, my dear niece, for speaking with an abruptness which, under other circumstances, would be unpardonable. You have, I am certain, given the subject of our last interview fair and serious consideration; and I trust that you are now prepared with candour to lay your answer before me. A few words will suffice—we perfectly understand one another."

He paused; and I, though feeling that I stood upon a mine which might in an instant explode, nevertheless answered with perfect composure, "I must now, sir, make the same reply which I did upon the last occasion, and I reiterate the declaration which I then made, that I never can nor will, while life and reason remain, consent to a union with my cousin Edward."

This announcement wrought no apparent change in Sir Arthur, except that he became deadly, almost lividly pale. He seemed lost in dark thought for a minute, and then with a slight effort said, "You have answered me honestly and directly; and you say your resolution is unchangeable; well, would it had been otherwise—would it had been otherwise—but be it as it is—I am satisfied."

He gave me his hand—it was cold and damp as death; under an assumed calmness, it was evident that he was fearfully agitated. He continued to hold my hand with an almost painful pressure, while, as if unconsciously, seeming to forget my presence, he muttered, "strange, strange, strange, indeed! fatuity, helpless fatuity!" there was here a long pause. "Madness *indeed* to strain a cable that is rotten to the very heart—it must break—and then—all goes." There was again a pause of some minutes, after which, suddenly changing his voice and manner to one of wakeful alacrity, he exclaimed, "Margaret, my son Edward shall plague you no more. He leaves this country on to-morrow for France—he shall speak no more upon this subject—never, never more—whatever events depended upon your answer must now take their own course; but as for this fruitless proposal, it has been tried enough; it can be repeated no more." At these words he coldly suffered my hand to drop, as if to express his total abandonment of all his projected schemes of alliance; and certainly the action, with the accompanying words, produced upon my mind a more solemn and depressing effect than I believed possible to have been caused by the course which I had determined to pursue; it struck upon my heart with an awe and heaviness which *will* accompany the accomplishment of an important and irrevocable act, even though no doubt or scruple remains to make it possible that the agent should wish it undone.

"Well," said my uncle, after a little time, "we now cease to speak upon this topic, never to resume it again—remember you shall have no farther uneasiness from Edward; he leaves Ireland for France on to-morrow; this will be a relief to you; may I depend upon your *honour* that no word touching the subject of this interview shall ever escape *you*?" I gave him the desired assurance; he said, "it is well—I am satisfied—we have nothing more, I believe, to say upon either side, and my presence must be a restraint upon you, I shall therefore bid you farewell." I then left the apartment, scarcely knowing what to think of the strange interview which had just taken place.

On the next day my uncle took occasion to tell me that Edward had actually sailed, if his intention had not been interfered with by adverse circumstances; and two days subsequently he actually produced a letter from his son, written, as it said, *on board*, and despatched while the ship was getting under weigh. This was a great satisfaction to me, and as being likely to prove so, it was no doubt communicated to me by Sir Arthur. During all this trying period, I had found infinite consolation in the society and sympathy of my dear cousin Emily. I never in after-life formed a friendship so close, so fervent, and upon which, in all its progress, I could look back with feelings of such unalloyed pleasure, upon whose termination I must ever dwell with so deep, so yet unembittered regret. In cheerful converse with her I soon recovered my spirits considerably, and passed my time agreeably enough, although still in the utmost seclusion. Matters went on smoothly enough, although I could not help sometimes feeling a momentary, but horrible uncertainty respecting my uncle's character; which was not altogether unwarranted by the circumstances of the two trying interviews whose particulars I have just detailed. The unpleasant impression which these conferences were calculated to leave upon my mind, was fast wearing away, when there occurred a circumstance, slight indeed in itself, but calculated irresistibly to awaken all my worst suspicions, and to overwhelm me again with anxiety and terror.

I had one day left the house with my cousin Emily, in order to take a ramble of considerable length, for the purpose of sketching some favourite views, and we had walked about half a mile when I perceived that we had forgotten our drawing materials, the absence of which would have defeated the object of our walk. Laughing at our own thoughtlessness, we returned to the house, and leaving Emily without, I ran up stairs to procure the drawing books and pencils which lay in my bed-room. As I ran up the stairs, I was met by the tall, ill-looking French woman, evidently a good deal flurried; "Que veut, Madame?" said she, with a more decided effort to be polite, than I had ever known her make before. "No, no—no matter," said I, hastily running by her in the direction of my room. "Madame," cried she, in a high key, "restez ici si vous plaite, votre chambre n'est pas faite"—your room is not ready for your reception yet. I continued to move on without heeding her. She was some way behind me, and feeling that she could not otherwise prevent my entrance, for I was now upon the very lobby, she made a desperate attempt to seize hold of my person; she succeeded in grasping the end of my shawl, which she drew from my shoulders, but slipping at the same time upon the polished oak floor, she fell at full length upon the boards. A little frightened as well as angry at the rudeness of this strange woman, I hastily pushed open the door of my room, at which I now stood, in order to escape from her; but great was my amazement on entering to find the apartment pre-occupied. The window was open, and beside it stood two male figures; they appeared to be examining the fastenings of the casement, and their backs were turned towards the door. One of them was my uncle; they both had turned on my entrance, as if startled; the stranger was booted and cloaked, and wore a heavy broad-leafed hat over his brows; he turned but for a moment, and averted his face; but I had seen enough to convince me that he was no other than my cousin Edward. My uncle had some iron instrument in his hand, which he hastily concealed behind his back; and coming towards me, said something as if in an explanatory tone; but I was too much shocked and confounded to understand what it might be. He said something about "*repairs*—window-frames—cold, and safety." I did not wait, however, to ask or to receive explanations, but hastily left the room. As I went down the stairs I thought I heard the voice of the French woman in all the shrill volubility of excuse, which was met, however, by suppressed but vehement imprecations, or what seemed to me to be such, in which the voice of my cousin Edward distinctly mingled.

I joined my cousin Emily quite out of breath. I need not say that my head was too full of other things to think much of drawing for that day. I imparted to her frankly the cause of my alarms, but at the same time, as gently as I could; and with tears she promised vigilance, and devotion, and love. I never had reason for a moment to repent the unreserved confidence which I then reposed in her. She was no less surprised than I, at the unexpected appearance of Edward, whose departure for France neither of us had for a moment doubted, but which was now proved by his actual presence to be nothing more than an imposture practised, I feared, for no good end. The situation in which I had found my uncle had removed completely all my doubts as to his designs, I magnified suspicions into certainties, and dreaded night after night that I should be murdered in my bed. The nervousness produced by sleepless nights and days of anxious fears increased the horrors of my situation to such a degree, that I at length wrote a letter to a Mr. Jefferies, an old and faithful friend of my father's, and perfectly acquainted with all his affairs, praying him, for God's sake, to relieve me from my present terrible situation, and communicating without reserve the nature and grounds of my suspicions. This letter I kept sealed and directed for two or three days always about my person, for discovery would have been ruinous, in expectation of an opportunity which might be safely trusted, whereby to have it placed in the post-office; as neither Emily or I were permitted to pass beyond the precincts of the demesne itself, which was surrounded by high walls formed of dry stone, the difficulty of procuring such an opportunity was greatly enhanced. At this time Emily had a short conversation with her father, which she reported to me instantly. After some indifferent matter, he had asked her whether she and I were upon good terms, and whether I was unreserved in my disposition. She answered in the affirmative; and he then inquired whether I had been much surprised to find him in my chamber on the other day. She answered that I had been both surprised and amused. "And what did she think of George Wilson's appearance?" "Who?" inquired she. "Oh! the architect," he answered, "who is to contract for the repairs of the house; he is accounted a handsome fellow." "She could not see his face," said Emily, "and she was in such a hurry to escape that she scarcely noticed him." Sir Arthur appeared satisfied, and the conversation ended.

This slight conversation repeated accurately to me by Emily, had the effect of confirming, if indeed any thing was required to do so, all that I had before believed as to Edward's actual presence; and I naturally became, if possible, more anxious than ever to despatch the letter to Mr. Jefferies. An opportunity at length occurred. As Emily and I were walking one day near the gate of the demesne, a lad from the village happened to be passing down the avenue from the house; the spot was secluded, and as this person was not connected by service with those whose observation I dreaded, I committed the letter to his keeping, with strict injunctions that he should put it without delay into the receiver of the town post-office; at the same time I added a suitable gratuity, and the man having made many protestations of punctuality, was soon out of sight. He was hardly gone when I began to doubt my discretion in having trusted this person; but I had no better or safer means of despatching the letter, and I was not warranted in suspecting him of such wanton dishonesty as an inclination to tamper with it; but I could not be quite satisfied of its safety until I had received an answer, which could not arrive for a few days. Before I did, however, an event occurred which a little surprised me. I was sitting in my bed-room early in the day, reading by myself, when I heard a knock at the door. "Come in," said I, and my uncle entered the room. "Will you excuse me," said he, "I sought you in the parlour, and thence I have come here. I desired to say a word with you. I trust that you have hitherto found my conduct to you such as that of a guardian towards his ward should be." I dared not withold my assent. "And," he continued, "I trust that you have not found me harsh or unjust, and that you have perceived, my dear niece, that I have sought to make this poor place as agreeable to you as may be?" I assented again; and he put his hand in his pocket, whence he drew a folded paper, and dashing it upon the table with startling emphasis he said, "did you write that letter?" The sudden and fearful alteration of his voice, manner, and face, but more than all, the unexpected production of my letter to Mr. Jefferies, which I at once recognised, so confounded and terrified me, that I felt almost choking. I could not utter a word. "Did you write that letter?" he repeated with slow and intense emphasis. "You did, liar and hypocrite. You dared to write this foul and infamous libel; but it shall be your last. Men will universally believe you mad, if I choose to call for an inquiry. I can make you appear so. The suspicions expressed in this letter are the halucinations and alarms of moping lunacy. I have defeated your first attempt, madam; and by the holy God, if ever you make another, chains, straw, darkness, and the keeper's whip shall be you lasting portion." With these astounding words he left the room, leaving me almost fainting.

I was now almost reduced to despair—my last cast had failed—I had no course left, but that of eloping secretly from the castle, and placing myself under the protection of the nearest magistrate. I felt if this were not done, and speedily, that I should be *murdered*. No one, from mere description, can have an idea of the unmitigated horror of my situation—a helpless, weak, inexperienced girl, placed under the power, and wholly at the mercy of evil men, and feeling that she had it not in her power to escape for a moment from the malignant influences under which she was probably fated to fall—and with a consciousness that if violence, if murder were designed, her dying shriek would be lost in void space—no human being would be near to aid her—no human interposition could deliver her.

I had seen Edward but once during his visit, and as I did not meet with him again, I began to think that he must have taken his departure—a conviction which was to a certain degree satisfactory, as I regarded his absence as indicating the removal of immediate danger. Emily also arrived circuitously at the same conclusion, and not without good grounds, for she managed indirectly to learn that Edward's black horse had actually been for a day and part of a night in the castle stables, just at the time of her brother's supposed visit. The horse had gone, and as she argued, the rider must have departed with it. This point being so far settled, I felt a little less uncomfortable; when being one day alone in my bed-room, I happened to look out from the window, and to my unutterable horror, I beheld peering through an opposite casement, my cousin Edward's face. Had I seen the evil one himself in bodily shape, I could not have experienced a more sickening revulsion. I was too much appaled to move at once from the window, but I did so soon enough to avoid his eye. He was looking fixedly into the narrow quadrangle upon which the window opened. I shrunk back unperceived, to pass the rest of the day in terror and despair. I went to my room early that night, but I was too miserable to sleep. At about twelve o'clock, feeling very nervous, I determined to call my cousin Emily, who slept, you will remember, in the next room, which communicated with mine by a second door. By this private entrance I found my way into her chamber, and without difficulty persuaded her to return to my room and sleep with me. We accordingly lay down together, she undressed, and I with my clothes on, for I was every moment walking up and down the room, and felt too nervous and miserable to think of rest or comfort. Emily was soon fast asleep, and I lay awake, fervently longing for the first pale gleam of morning, reckoning every stroke of the old clock with an impatience which made every hour appear like six. It must have been about one o'clock when I thought I heard a slight noise at the partition door between Emily's room and mine, as if caused by somebody's turning the key in the lock. I held my breath, and the same sound was repeated at the second door of my room—that which opened upon the lobby—the sound was here distinctly caused by the revolution of the bolt in the lock, and it was followed by a slight pressure upon the door itself, as if to ascertain the security of the lock. The person, whoever it might be, was probably satisfied, for I heard the old boards of the lobby creak and strain, as if under the weight of somebody moving cautiously over them. My sense of hearing became unnaturally, almost painfully acute. I suppose the imagination added distinctness to sounds vague in themselves. I thought that I could actually hear the breathing of the person who was slowly returning down the lobby; at the head of the stair-case their appeared to occur a pause; and I could distinctly hear two or three sentences hastily whispered; the steps then descended the stairs with apparently less caution. I now ventured to walk quickly and lightly to the lobby door, and attempted to open it; it was indeed fast locked upon the outside, as was also the other. I now felt that the dreadful hour was come; but one desperate expedient remained—it was to awaken Emily, and by our united strength, to attempt to force the partition door, which was slighter than the other, and through this to pass to the lower part of the house, whence it might be possible to escape to the grounds, and forth to the village. I returned to the bed-side, and shook Emily, but in vain; nothing that I could do availed to produce from her more than a few incoherent words—it was a death-like sleep. She had certainly drank of some narcotic, as had I probably also, spite of all the caution with which I had examined every thing presented to us to eat or drink. I now attempted, with as little noise as possible, to force first one door, then the other—but all in vain. I believe no strength could have effected my object, for both doors opened inwards. I therefore collected whatever moveables I could carry thither, and piled them against the doors, so as to assist me in whatever attempts I should make to resist the entrance of those without. I then returned to the bed and endeavoured again, but fruitlessly, to awaken my cousin. It was not sleep, it was torpor, lethargy, death. I knelt down and prayed with an agony of earnestness; and then seating myself upon the bed, I awaited my fate with a kind of terrible tranquility.

I heard a faint clanking sound from the narrow court which I have already mentioned, as if caused by the scraping of some iron instrument against stones or rubbish. I at first determined not to disturb the calmness which I now felt, by uselessly watching the proceedings of those who sought my life; but as the sounds continued, the horrible curiosity which I felt overcame every other emotion, and I determined, at all hazards, to gratify it. I, therefore, crawled upon my knees to the window, so as to let the smallest portion of my head appear above the sill. The moon was shining with an uncertain radiance upon the antique grey buildings, and obliquely upon the narrow court beneath, one side of which was therefore clearly illuminated, while the other was lost in obscurity, the sharp outlines of the old gables, with their nodding clusters of ivy, being at first alone visible. Whoever or whatever occasioned the noise which had excited my curiosity, was concealed under the shadow of the dark side of the quadrangle. I placed my hand over my eyes to shade them from the moonlight, which was so bright as to be almost dazzling, and, peering into the darkness, I first dimly, but afterwards gradually, almost with full distinctness, beheld the form of a man engaged in digging what appeared to be a rude hole close under the wall. Some implements, probably a shovel and pickaxe, lay beside him, and to these he every now and then applied himself as the nature of the ground required. He pursued his task rapidly, and with as little noise as possible. "So," thought I, as shovelful after shovelful the dislodged rubbish mounted into a heap, "they are digging the grave in which, before two hours pass, I must lie, a cold, mangled corpse. I am *their's*—I cannot escape." I felt as if my reason was leaving me. I started to my feet, and in mere despair I applied myself again to each of the two doors alternately. I strained every nerve and sinew, but I might as well have attempted, with my single strength, to force the building itself from its foundation. I threw myself madly upon the ground, and clasped my hands over my eyes as if to shut out the horrible images which crowded upon me. The paroxysm passed away. I prayed once more with the bitter, agonised fervour of one who feels that the hour of death is present and inevitable. When I arose, I went once more to the window and looked out, just in time to see a shadowy figure glide stealthily along the wall. The task was finished. The catastrophe of the tragedy must soon be accomplished. I determined now to defend my life to the last; and that I might be able to do so with some effect, I ched the room for something which serve as a weapon; but either through accident, or from an anticipation of such a possibility, every thing which might have been made available for such a purpose had been carefully removed. I must then die tamely and without an effort to defend myself. A thought suddenly struck me—might it not be possible to escape through the door, which the assassin must open in order to enter the room? I resolved to make the attempt. I felt assured that the door through which ingress to the room would be effected was that which opened upon the lobby. It was the more direct way, besides being, for obvious reasons, less liable to interruption than the other. I resolved, then, to place myself behind a projection of the wall, whose shadow would serve fully to conceal me, and when the door should be opened, and before they should have discovered the identity of the occupant of the bed, to creep noiselessly from the room, and then to trust to Providence for escape. In order to facilitate this scheme, I removed all the lumber which I had heaped against the door; and I had nearly completed my arrangements, when I perceived the room suddenly darkened, by the close approach of some shadowy object to the window. On turning my eyes in that direction, I observed at the top of the casement, as if suspended from above, first the feet, then the legs, then the body, and at length the whole figure of a man present itself. It was Edward T——n. He appeared to be guiding his descent so as to bring his feet upon the centre of the stone block which occupied the lower part of the window; and having secured his footing upon this, he kneeled down and began to gaze into the room. As the moon was gleaming into the chamber, and the bed curtains were drawn, he was able to distinguish the bed itself and its contents. He appeared satisfied with his scrutiny, for he looked up and made a sign with his hand, upon which the rope by which his descent had been effected was slackened from above, and he proceeded to disengage it from his waist; this accomplished, he applied his hands to the window-frame, which must have been ingeniously contrived for the purpose, for with apparently no resistance the whole frame, containing casement and all, slipped from its position in the wall, and was by him lowered into the room. The cold night wind waved the bed-curtains, and he paused for a moment

—all was still again—and he stepped in upon the floor of the room. He held in his hand what appeared to be a steel instrument, shaped something like a hammer, but larger and sharper at the extremities. This he held rather behind him, while, with three long, *tip-toe* strides, he brought himself to the bedside. I felt that the discovery must now be made, and held my breath in momentary expectation of the execration in which he would vent his surprise and disappointment. I closed my eyes—there was a pause—but it was a short one. I heard two dull blows, given in rapid succession: a quivering sigh, and the long-drawn, heavy breathing of the sleeper was for ever suspended. I unclosed my eyes, and saw the murderer fling the quilt across the head of his victim: he then, with the instrument of death still in his hand, proceeded to the lobby door, upon which he tapped sharply twice or thrice—a quick step was then heard approaching, and a voice whispered something from without—Edward answered, with a kind of chuckle, "her ladyship is past complaining; unlock the door, in the devil's name, unless you're afraid to come in, and help me to lift the body out of the window." The key was turned in the lock—the door opened—and my uncle entered the room. I have told you already that I had placed myself under the shade of a projection of the wall, close to the door. I had instinctively shrunk down cowering towards the ground on the entrance of Edward through the window. When my uncle entered the room he and his son both stood so very close to me that his hand was every moment upon the point of touching my face. I held my breath, and remained motionless as death.

"You had no interruption from the next room?" said my uncle.

"No," was the brief reply.

"Secure the jewels, Ned; the French harpy must not lay her claws upon them. You're a steady hand, by G—; not much blood—eh?"

"Not twenty drops," replied his son, "and those on the quilt."

"I'm glad it's over," whispered my uncle again—"we must lift the—the *thing* through the window, and lay the rubbish over it."

They then turned to the bedside, and, winding the bed-clothes round the body, carried it between them slowly to the window, and, exchanging a few brief words with some one below, they shoved it over the window sill, and I heard it fall heavily on the ground underneath.

"I'll take the jewels," said my uncle; "there are two caskets in the lower drawer."

He proceeded, with an accuracy which, had I been more at ease, would have furnished me with matter of astonishment, to lay his hand upon the very spot where my jewels lay; and having possessed himself of them, he called to his son—

"Is the rope made fast above?"

"I'm not a fool—to be sure it is," replied he.

They then lowered themselves from the window. I now rose lightly and cautiously, scarcely daring to breathe, from my place of concealment, and was creeping towards the door, when I heard my cousin's voice, in a sharp whisper, exclaim, "Scramble up again; G—d d——n you, you've forgot to lock the room door;" and I perceived, by the straining of the rope which hung from above, that the mandate was instantly obeyed. Not a second was to be lost. I passed through the door, which was only closed, and moved as rapidly as I could, consistently with stillness, along the lobby. Before I had gone many yards, I heard the door through which I had just passed double locked on the inside. I glided down the stairs in terror, lest, at every corner, I should meet the murderer or one of his accomplices. I reached the hall, and listened for a moment to ascertain whether all was silent around; no sound was audible; the parlour windows opened on the park, and through one of them I might, I thought, easily effect my escape. Accordingly, I hastily entered; but, to my consternation, a candle was burning in the room, and by its light I saw a figure seated at the dinner table, upon which lay glasses, bottles, and the other accompaniments of a drinking party. Two or three chairs were placed about the table, irregularly, as if hastily abandoned by their occupants. A single glance satisfied me that the figure was that of my French attendant. She was fast asleep, having probably drank deeply. There was something malignant and ghastly in the calmness of this bad woman's features, dimly illuminated as they were by the flickering blaze of the candle. A knife lay upon the table, and the terrible thought struck me—"Should I kill this sleeping accomplice in the guilt of the murderer, and thus secure my retreat?" Nothing could be easier—it was but to draw the blade across her throat—the work of a second. An instant's pause, however, corrected me—"No," thought I, "the God who has conducted me thus far through the valley of the shadow of death, will not abandon me now. I will fall into their hands, or I will escape hence, but it shall be free from the stain of blood—His will be done." I felt a confidence arising from this reflection, an assurance of protection which I cannot describe. There was no other means of escape, so I advanced, with a firm step and collected mind, to the window. I noiselessly withdrew the bars, and unclosed the shutters—I pushed open the casement, and, without waiting to look behind me, I ran with my utmost speed, scarcely feeling the ground under me, down the avenue, taking care to keep upon the grass which bordered it. I did not for a moment slack my speed, and I had now gained the centre point between the park-gate and the mansion house—here the avenue made a wider circuit, and in order to avoid delay, I directed my way across the smooth sward round which the pathway wound, intending, at the opposite side of the flat, at a point which I distinguished by a group of old birch trees, to enter again upon the beaten track, which was from thence tolerably direct to the gate. I had, with my utmost speed, got about half way across this broad flat, when the rapid treading of a horse's hoofs struck upon my ear. My heart swelled in my bosom, as though I would smother. The clattering of galloping hoofs approached—I was pursued—they were now upon the sward on which I was running—there was not a bush or a bramble to shelter me—and, as if to render escape altogether desperate, the moon, which had hitherto been obscured, at this moment shone forth with a broad clear light, which made every object distinctly visible. The sounds were now close behind me. I felt my knees bending under me, with the sensation which torments one in dreams. I reeled—I stumbled—I fell—and at the same instant the cause of my alarm wheeled past me at full gallop. It was one of the young filleys which pastured loose about the park, whose frolics had thus all but maddened me with terror. I scrambled to my feet, and rushed on with weak but rapid steps, my sportive companion still galloping round and round me with many a frisk and fling, until, at length, more dead than alive, I reached the avenue-gate and crossed the stile, I scarce knew how. I ran through the village, in which all was silent as the grave, until my progress was arrested by the hoarse voice of a sentinel, who cried, "Who goes there?" I felt that I was now safe. I turned in the direction of the voice, and fell fainting at the soldier's feet. When I came to myself, I was sitting in a miserable hovel, surrounded by strange faces, all bespeaking curiosity and compassion. Many soldiers were in it also: indeed, as I afterwards found, it was employed as a guard-room by a detachment of troops quartered for that night in the town. In a few words I informed their officer of the circumstances which had occurred, describing also the appearance of the persons engaged in the murder; and he, without loss of time, proceeded to the mansion-house of Carrickleigh, taking with him a party of his men. But the villains had discovered their mistake, and had effected their escape, before the arrival of the military.

The Frenchwoman was, however, arrested in the neighbourhood upon the next day. She was tried and condemned upon the ensuing assizes; and previous to her execution confessed that "*she had a hand in making Hugh Tisdal's bed.*" She had been a housekeeper in the castle at the time, and a kind of *chere amie* of my uncle's. She was, in reality, able to speak English like a native, but had exclusively used the French language, I suppose to facilitate her disguise. She died the same hardened wretch which she had lived, confessing her crimes only, as she alleged, that her doing so might involve Sir Arthur T——n, the great author of her guilt and misery, and whom she now regarded with unmitigated detestation.

With the particulars of Sir Arthur's and his son's escape, as far as they are known, you are acquainted. You are also in possession of their after fate—the terrible, the tremendous retribution which, after long delays of many years, finally overtook and crushed them. Wonderful and inscrutable are the dealings of God with his creatures.

Deep and fervent as must always be my gratitude to Heaven for my deliverance, effected by a chain of providential occurrences, the failing of a single link of which must have ensured my destruction, I was long before I could look back upon it with other feelings than those of bitterness, almost of agony. The only being that had ever really loved me, my nearest and dearest friend, ever ready to sympathise, to counsel, and to assist—the gayest, the gentlest, the warmest heart—the only creature on earth that cared for me—*her* life had been the price of my deliverance; and I then uttered the wish, which no event of my long and sorrowful life has taught me to recall, that she had been spared, and that, in her stead, *I* were mouldering in the grave, forgotten and at rest.

THE BRIDAL OF CARRIGVARAH.

BEING A SIXTH EXTRACT FROM THE LEGACY OF THE LATE FRANCIS PURCELL, P.P. OF DRUMCOOLAGH.

In a sequestered district of the county of Limerick, there stood in my early life, some forty years ago, one of those strong stone buildings, half castle, half farm-house, which are not unfrequent in the South of Ireland, and whose solid masonry and massive construction seem to prove at once the insecurity and the caution of the Cromwellite settlers who erected them. At the time of which I speak, this building was tenanted by an elderly man, whose starch and puritanic mien and manners might have become the morose preaching parliamentarian captain, who had raised the house and ruled the household more than a hundred years before; but this man, though Protestant by descent as by name, was not so in religion; he was a strict, and in outward observances, an exemplary Catholic; his father had returned in early youth to the true faith, and died in the bosom of the church.

Martin Heathcote was, at the time of which I speak, a widower, but his house-keeping was not on that account altogether solitary, for he had a daughter whose age was now sufficiently advanced to warrant her father in imposing upon her the grave duties of domestic superintendence. This little establishment was perfectly isolated, and very little intruded upon by acts of neighbourhood; for the rank of its occupants was of that equivocal kind which precludes all familiar association with those of a decidedly inferior rank, while it is not sufficient to entitle its possessors to the society of established gentility, among whom the nearest residents were the O'Maras of Carrigvarah, whose mansion-house, constructed out of the ruins of an old abbey, whose towers and cloisters had been levelled by the shot of Cromwell's artillery, stood not half a mile lower upon the river banks. Colonel O'Mara, the possessor of the estates, was then in a declining state of health, and absent with his lady from the country, leaving at the castle his son, young O'Mara, and a kind of humble companion, named Edward Dwyer, who, if report belied him not, had done in his early days some *peculiar services* for the Colonel, who had been a gay man—perhaps worse—but enough of recapitulation.

It was in the Autumn of the year 17— that the events which led to the catastrophe which I have to detail occurred. I shall run through the sad recital as briefly as clearness will permit, and leave you to moralise, if such be your mood, upon the story of real life, which I even now trace at this distant period not without emotion.

It was upon a beautiful autumn evening, at that glad period of the season when the harvest yields its abundance, that two figures were seen sauntering along the banks of the winding river, which I described as bounding the farm occupied by Heathcote; they had been, as the rods and landing nets which they listlessly carried went to show, plying the gentle, but in this case not altogether solitary craft of the fisherman; one of those persons was a tall and singularly handsome young man, whose dark hair and complexion might almost have belonged to a Spaniard, as might also the proud but melancholy expression which gave to his countenance a character which contrasts sadly, but not uninterestingly, with extreme youth; his air, as he spoke with his companion, was marked by that careless familiarity which denotes a conscious superiority of one kind or other, or which may be construed into a species of contempt; his comrade afforded to him in every respect a striking contrast. He was rather low in stature—a defect which was enhanced by a broad and square-built figure—his face was sallow, and his features had that prominence and sharpness which frequently accompany personal deformity—a remarkably wide mouth, with teeth white as the fangs of a wolf, and a pair of quick, dark eyes, whose effect was heightened by the shadow of a heavy black brow, gave to his face a power of expression, particularly when sarcastic or malignant emotions were to be exhibited, which features regularly handsome could scarcely have possessed.

"Well, sir," said the latter personage, "I have lived in hall and abbey, town and country, here and abroad for forty years and more, and should know a thing or two, and as I am a living man, I swear I think the girl loves you."

"You are a fool, Ned," said the younger.

"I may be a fool," replied the first speaker, "in matters where my own advantage is staked, but my eye is keen enough to see through the flimsy disguise of a country damsel at a glance; and I tell you, as surely as I hold this rod, the girl loves you."

"Oh! this is downright headstrong folly," replied the young fisherman. "Why, Ned, you try to persuade me against my reason, that the event which is most to be deprecated has actually occurred. She is, no doubt, a pretty girl—a beautiful girl—but I have not lost my heart to her; and why should I wish her to be in love with me? Tush, man, the days of romance are gone, and a young gentleman may talk, and walk, and laugh with a pretty country maiden, and never breathe aspirations, or vows, or sighs about the matter; unequal matches are much oftener read of than made, and the man who could, even in thought, conceive a wish against the honour of an unsuspecting, artless girl, is a villain, for whom hanging is too good."

This concluding sentence was uttered with an animation and excitement, which the mere announcement of an abstract moral sentiment could hardly account for.

"You are then indifferent, honestly and in sober earnest, indifferent to the girl?" inquired Dwyer.

"Altogether so," was the reply.

"Then I have a request to make," continued Dwyer, "and I may as well urge it now as at any other time. I have been for nearly twenty years the faithful, and by no means useless, servant of your family; you know that I have rendered your father critical and important services——" he paused, and added hastily, "you are not in the mood—I tire you, sir."

"Nay," cried O'Mara, "I listen patiently—proceed."

"For all these services, and they were not, as I have said, few or valueless, I have received little more reward than liberal promises; you have told me often that this should be mended—I'll make it easily done—I'm not unreasonable—I should be contented to hold Heathcote's ground, along with this small farm on which we stand, as full quittance of all obligations and promises between us."

"But how the devil can I effect that for you; this farm, it is true, I, or my father rather, may lease to you, but Heathcote's title we cannot impugn; and even if we could, you would not expect us to ruin an honest man, in order to make way for *you*, Ned."

"What I am," replied Dwyer, with the calmness of one who is so accustomed to contemptuous insinuations as to receive them with perfect indifference, "is to be attributed to my devotedness to your honourable family—but that is neither here nor there. I do not ask you to displace Heathcote, in order to make room for me. I know it is out of your power to do so. Now hearken to me for a moment; Heathcote's property, that which he has set out to tenants, is worth, say in rents, at most one hundred pounds; half of this yearly amount is assigned to your father, until payment be made of a bond for a thousand pounds, with interest and soforth. Hear me patiently for a moment and I have done. Now go you to Heathcote, and tell him your father will burn the bond, and cancel the debt, upon one condition—that when I am in possession of this farm, which you can lease to me on what terms you think suitable, he will convey over his property to me, reserving what life-interest may appear fair, I engaging at the same time to marry his daughter, and make such settlements upon her as shall be thought fitting—he is not a fool—the man will close with the offer."

O'Mara turned shortly upon Dwyer, and gazed upon him for a moment with an expression of almost unmixed resentment. "How," said he at length, "*You* contract to marry Ellen Heathcote; the poor, innocent, confiding, light-hearted girl. No, no, Edward Dwyer, I know you too well for that—your services, be they what they will, must not, shall not go, unrewarded—your avarice shall be appeased—but not with a human sacrifice! Dwyer, I speak to you without disguise; you know me to be acquainted with your history, and what's more, with your character. Now tell me frankly, were I to do as you desire me, in cool blood, should I not prove myself a more uncompromising and unfeeling villain than humanity even in its most monstrous shapes has ever yet given birth to."

Dwyer met this impetuous language with the unmoved and impenetrable calmness which always marked him when excitement would have appeared in others; he even smiled as he replied, (and Dwyer's smile, for I have seen it, was characteristically of that unfortunate kind which implies, as regards the emotions of others, not sympathy but derision,) "this eloquence goes to prove Ellen Heathcote something nearer to your heart than your great indifference would have led me to suppose."

There was something in the tone, perhaps in the truth of the insinuation, which at once kindled the quick pride and the anger of O'Mara, and he instantly replied, "Be silent, sir,—this is insolent folly."

Whether it was that Dwyer was more keenly interested in the success of his suit, or more deeply disappointed at its failure than he cared to express, or that he was in a less complacent mood than was his wont, it is certain that his countenance expressed more emotion at this direct insult than it had ever exhibited before under similar circumstances; for his eyes gleamed for an instant with savage and undisguised ferocity upon the young man, and a dark glow crossed his brow, and for the moment he looked about to spring at the throat of his insolent patron; but the impulse, whatever it might be, was quickly suppressed, and before O'Mara had time to detect the scowl, it had vanished.

"Nay, sir," said Dwyer, "I meant no offence, and will take none, at *your* hands at least. I will confess I care not, in love and soforth, a single bean for the girl; she was the mere channel through which her father's wealth, if such a pittance deserves the name, was to have flowed into my possession—'twas in respect of your family finances the most economical provision for myself which I could devise—a matter in which you, not I, are interested. As for women, they are all pretty much alike to me. I am too old myself to make nice distinctions, and too ugly to succeed by Cupid's arts; and when a man despairs of success, he soon ceases to care for it. So, if you know me, as you profess to do, rest satisfied '*cæteris paribus*;' the money part of the transaction being equally advantageous, I should regret the loss of Ellen Heathcote just as little as I should the escape of a minnow from my landing net."

They walked on for a few minutes in silence, which was not broken till Dwyer, who had climbed a stile in order to pass a low stone-wall which lay in their way, exclaimed, "By the rood, she's here—how like a philosopher you look."

The conscious blood mounted to O'Mara's cheek; he crossed the stile, and separated from him only by a slight fence and a gate, stood the subject of their recent and somewhat angry discussion.

"God save you, Miss Heathcote," cried Dwyer, approaching the gate—the salutation was cheerfully returned, and before any thing more could pass, O'Mara had joined the party.

My friend, that you may understand the strength and depth of those impetuous passions, that you may account for the fatal infatuation which led to the catastrophe which I have to relate, I must tell you, that though I have seen the beauties of cities and of courts, with all the splendour of studied ornament about them to enhance their graces, possessing charms which had made them known almost throughout the world, and worshipped with the incense of a thousand votaries, yet never, no where did I behold a being of such exquisite and touching beauty, as that possessed by the creature of of whom I have just spoken. At the moment of which I write, she was standing near the gate, close to which several brown-armed, rosy-cheeked damsels were engaged in milking the peaceful cows, who stood picturesquely grouped together. She had just thrown back the hood, which is the graceful characteristic of the Irish girl's attire, so that her small and classic head was quite uncovered, save only by the dark brown hair which with graceful simplicity was parted above her forehead. There was nothing to shade the clearness of her beautiful complexion; the delicately formed features, so exquisite when taken singly, so indescribable when combined, so purely artless, yet so meet for all expression. She was a thing so very beautiful, you could not look on her without feeling your heart touched as by sweet music. Whose lightest action was a grace—whose lightest word a spell—no limner's art, though ne'er so perfect, could shadow forth her beauty; and do I dare with feeble words try to make you see it?* Providence is indeed no respecter of persons, its blessings and its inflictions are apportioned with an undistinguishing hand, and until the race is over, and life be done, none can know whether those perfections, which seemed its goodliest gifts, may not prove its most fatal; but enough of this.

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* Father Purcell seems to have had an admiration for the beauties of nature, particularly as developed in the fair sex—a habit of mind which has been rather improved upon than discontinued by his successors from Maynooth.—Ed.

Dwyer strolled carelessly onward by the banks of the stream, leaving his young companion leaning over the gate in close and interesting parlance with Ellen Heathcote; as he moved on, he half thought, half uttered words to this effect, "Insolent young spawn of ingratitude and guilt, how long must I submit to be trod upon thus; and yet why should I murmur—his day is even now declining—and if I live a year, I shall see the darkness cover him and his for ever. Scarce half his broad estates shall save him—but I must wait—I am but a pauper now—a beggar's accusation is always a libel—they must reward me soon—and were I independent once, I'd make them feel my power, and feel it *so*, that I should die the richest or the best avenged servant of a great man that has ever been heard of—yes, I must wait—I must make sure of something at least—I must be able to stand by myself—and then—and then——" he clutched his fingers together, as if in the act of strangling the object of his hatred. "But one thing shall save him—but one thing only—he shall pay me my own price—and if he acts liberally, as no doubt he will do, upon compulsion, why he saves his reputation—perhaps his neck—the insolent young whelp yonder would speak in an humbler key if he but knew his father's jeopardy—but all in good time."

He now stood upon the long, steep, narrow bridge, which crossed the river close to Carrigvarah, the family mansion of the O'Mara's; he looked back in the direction in which he had left his companion, and leaning upon the battlement, he ruminated long and moodily; at length he raised himself and said, "He loves the girl, and *will* love her more—I have an opportunity of winning favour, of doing service, which shall bind him to me; yes, he shall have the girl, if I have art to compass the matter. I must think upon it." He entered the avenue and was soon lost in the distance.

Days and weeks passed on, and young O'Mara daily took his rod and net, and rambled up the river; and scarce twelve hours elapsed in which some of those accidents, which invariably bring lovers together, did not secure him a meeting of longer or shorter duration with the beautiful girl whom he so fatally loved.

One evening, after a long interview with her, in which he had been almost irresistibly prompted to declare his love, and had all but yielded himself up to the passionate impulse, upon his arrival at home he found a letter on the table awaiting his return; it was from his father to the following effect:

"TO RICHARD O'MARA.

"September — 17—, L———m, England.

"My dear son,—I have just had a severe attack of my old and almost forgotten enemy, the gout; this I regard as a good sign; the doctors telling me that it is the safest developement of peccant humours; and I think my chest is less tormenting and oppressed than I have known it for some years. My chief reason for writing to you now, as I do it not without difficulty, is to let you know my pleasure in certain matters, in which I suspect some shameful, and, indeed, infatuated neglect on your part, 'quem perdere vult deus prius dementat:' how comes it that you have neglected to write to Lady Emily or any of that family? the understood relation subsisting between you is one of extreme delicacy, and which calls for marked and courteous, nay devoted attention upon your side. Lord —— is already offended; beware what you do; for as you will find, if this match be lost by your fault or folly, by —— I will cut you off with a shilling. I am not in the habit of using threats, when I do not mean to fulfil them, and that you well know; however I do not think you have much real cause for alarm in this case. Lady Emily, who, by the way, looks if possible more charming than ever, is any thing but hard-hearted, at least when *you* solicit; but do as I desire, and lose no time in making what excuse you may, and let me hear from you when you can fix a time to join me and your mother here. Your sincere well-wisher and father,

"RICHARD O'MARA."

In this letter was inclosed a smaller one, directed to Dwyer, and containing a check for twelve pounds, with the following words:

"Make use of the inclosed, and let

me hear if Richard is upon any wild scheme at present: I am uneasy about him, and not without reason; report to me speedily the result of your vigilance.

"R. O'Mara."

Dwyer just glanced through this brief, but not unwelcome, epistle; and deposited it and its contents in the secret recesses of his breeches pocket, and then fixed his eyes upon the face of his companion, who sat opposite, utterly absorbed in the perusal of his father's letter, which he read again and again, pausing and muttering between whiles, and apparently lost in no very pleasing reflections; at length he very abruptly exclaimed, "a delicate epistle truly—and a politic—would that my tongue had been burned through before I assented to that doubly-cursed contract. Why I am not pledged yet—I am not—there is neither writing, nor troth, nor word of honour, passed between us. My father has no right to pledge me, even though I told him I liked the girl, and would wish the match—'tis not enough that my father offers her my heart and hand—he has no right to do it—a delicate woman would not accept professions made by proxy. Lady Emily! Lady Emily! with all the tawdry frippery, and finery of dress and demeanour—compare *her* with—— Pshaw! rediculous!—how blind—how idiotic I have been."

He relapsed into moody reflections, which Dwyer did not care to disturb, and some ten minutes might have passed before he spoke again; when he did, it was in the calm tone of one who has irrevocably resolved upon some decided and important act.

"Dwyer," he said, rising and approaching that person, "whatever god or demon told you, even before my own heart knew it, that I loved Ellen Heathcote, spoke truth. I love her madly—I never dreamed till now how fervently, how irrevocably I am hers—how dead to me all other interests are—Dwyer, I know something of your disposition, and you, no doubt, think it strange that I should tell to you, of all persons, *such* a secret; but whatever be your faults, I think you are attached to our family—I am satisfied you will not betray me—I know——"

"Pardon me," said Dwyer, "if I say that great professions of confidence too frequently mark distrust—I have no possible motive to induce me to betray you—on the contrary I would gladly assist and direct whatever plans you may have formed—command me as you please—I have said enough."

"I will not doubt you, Dwyer," said O'Mara, "I have taken my resolution—I have, I think, firmness to act up to it. To marry Ellen Heathcote, situated as I am, were madness; to propose any thing else were worse, were villany not to be named—I will leave the country to-morrow, cost what pain it may, for England—I will at once break off the proposed alliance with Lady Emily, and will wait until I am my own master, to open my heart to Ellen—my father may say and do what he likes, but his passion will not last—he will forgive me—and even were he to disinherit me, as he threatens, there is some property which *must* descend to me, which his will cannot affect—he cannot ruin my interests—he *shall not* ruin my happiness—Dwyer give me pen and ink—I will write this moment."

This bold plan of proceeding, for many reasons, appeared inexpedient to Dwyer, and he determined not to consent to its adoption without a struggle.

"I commend your prudence," said he, "in determining to remove yourself from the fascinating influence which has so long bound you here; but beware of offending your father—Colonel O'Mara is not a man to forgive an act of deliberate disobedience—and surely you are not mad enough to ruin yourself with him, by offering an outrageous insult to Lady Emily, and to her family in her person; therefore you must not break off the understood contract which subsists between you by any formal act—hear me out patiently—you must let Lady Emily perceive, as you easily may, without rudeness or even coldness of manner, that she is perfectly indifferent to you; and when she understands this to be the case, if she possesses either delicacy or spirit, she will herself break off the engagement—make what delay it is possible to effect—it is very possible that your father, who cannot, in all probability, live many months, may not live as many days if harassed and excited by such scenes, as your breaking off your engagement must produce."

"Dwyer," said O'Mara, "I will hear you out—proceed."

"Besides, sir, remember," he continued, "the understanding which we have termed an engagement, was entered into without any direct sanction upon your part—your father has committed *himself*, not *you*, to Lord ——, before a real contract can subsist, you must be an assenting party to it—I know of no casuistry subtle enough to involve you in any engagement whatever, without such an ingredient—tush, you have an easy card to play."

"Well," said the young man, "I will think on what you have said—in the meantime I will write to my father to announce my immediate departure, in order to join him."

"Excuse me," said Dwyer, "but I would suggest that by hastening your departure you but bring your dangers nearer—while you are in this country a letter now and then keeps every thing quiet; but once across the channel and with the Colonel, you must either quarrel with him to you own destruction, or you must dance attendance upon Lady Emily with such assiduity as to commit yourself as completely as if you had been thrice called with her in the parish church—no, no, this side of the channel as long as you decently can—besides your sudden departure must appear suspicious, and will probably excite inquiry—every good end likely to be accomplished by your absence, will be effected as well by your departure for Dublin, where you may remain for three weeks or a month without giving rise to curiosity or doubt of an unpleasant kind—I would therefore advise you strongly, to write immediately to the Colonel, stating that business has occurred to defer your departure for a month, and you can then leave this place, if you think fit, immediately, that is within a week or so."

Young O'Mara was not hard to be persuaded—perhaps it was, that unacknowledged by himself, any argument which recommended his staying, even for an hour longer than his first decision had announced, in the neighbourhood of Ellen Heathcote, appeared peculiarly cogent and convincing; however this may have been, it is certain that he followed the counsel of his cool-headed follower, who retired that night to bed with the pleasing conviction that he was likely soon to involve his young patron in all the intricacies of disguise and intrigue—a consummation which would leave him totally at the mercy of the favoured confidant who should possess his secret.

Young O'Mara's reflections were more agitating, and less satisfactory, than those of his companion—he resolved upon leaving the country before two days had passed—he felt that he could not fairly seek to involve Ellen Heathcote in his fate by pledge or promise, until he had extricated himself from those trammels which constrained and embarrassed all his actions—his determination was so far prudent; but, alas! he also resolved that it was but right, but necessary, that he should see her before his departure; his leaving the country without a look or a word of parting kindness interchanged, must to her appear an act of cold and heartless caprice—he could not bear the thought.

"No," said he, "I am not child enough to say more than prudence tells me I ought to say; this cowardly distrust of my firmness I should and will contemn; besides why should I commit myself; it is possible the girl may not care for me. No, no, I need not shrink from this interview. I have no reason to doubt my firmness—none—none. I must cease to be governed by impulse. I am involved in rocks and quicksands; and a collected spirit, a quick eye, and a steady hand, alone can pilot me through. God grant me a safe voyage."

The next day came, and young O'Mara did not take his fishing rod as usual, but wrote two letters; the one to his father, announcing his intention of departing speedily for England; the other to Lady Emily, containing a cold but courteous apology for his apparent neglect; both these were despatched to the post-office that evening, and upon the next morning he was to leave the country.

Upon the night of the momentous day of which we have just spoken, Ellen Heathcote glided silently and unperceived from among the busy crowds, who were engaged in the gay dissipation, furnished by what is in Ireland technically called a dance;* and having drawn her mantle closely about her, was proceeding with quick steps to traverse the small field which separated her from her father's abode. She had not walked many yards when she became aware that a solitary figure, muffled in a cloak, stood in the pathway—it approached—a low voice whispered the name, "Ellen."

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* A meeting convened, as the name implies, for the cultivation of the light, fantastic toe; the expenses attendant upon which, music, &c., are defrayed by a subscription of one half-penny each.

"Is it you, Master Richard?" she replied.

He threw back the cloak which had concealed his features.

"It is I, Ellen," he said, "I have been watching for you. I will not delay you long."

He took her hand, and she did not attempt to withdraw it; for she was too artless to think any evil, too confiding to dread it.

"Ellen," he continued, even now unconsciously departing from the rigid course which prudence had marked out; "Ellen, I am going to leave the country; going on to-morrow. I have had letters from England. I must go. And the sea will soon be between us."

He paused, and she was silent.

"There is one request, one entreaty I have to make," he continued, "I would, when I am far away, have something to look at, which belonged to you. Will you give me—do not refuse it—one little lock of your beautiful hair?"

With artless alacrity, but with trembling hand, she took the scissors, which in simple fashion hung by her side, and detached one of the long and beautiful locks which parted over her forehead; she placed it in his hand. Again he took her hand, and twice he attempted to speak, in vain; at length he said:

"Ellen, when I am gone—when I am away—will you sometimes remember, sometimes think of me?"

Ellen Heathcote had as much, perhaps more, of what is noble in pride than the haughtiest beauty that ever trod a court; but the effort was useless; the honest struggle was in vain; and she burst into floods of tears, bitterer than she had ever shed before.

I cannot tell how passions rise and fall—I cannot describe the impetuous words of the young lover, as pressing again and again to his lips the cold, passive hand, which had been resigned to him, prudence, caution, doubts, resolutions, all vanished from his view, and melted into nothing. 'Tis for me to tell the simple fact, that from that brief interview they both departed, promised, and pledged to each other for ever.

Through the rest of this story events follow one another rapidly. A few nights after that which I have just mentioned, Ellen Heathcote disappeared; but her father was not left long in suspence as to her fate, for Dwyer, accompanied by one of those mendicant friars, who infested the country then even more numerously than they now do, called upon Heathcote before he had had time to take any active measures for the recovery of his child, and put him in possession of a document which appeared to contain satisfactory evidence of the marriage of Ellen Heathcote with Richard O'Mara, executed upon the evening previous, as the date went to show; and signed by both parties, as well by Dwyer and a servant of young O'Mara's, both these having acted as witnessess; and further supported by the signature of Peter Nicholls, a brother of the order of St. Francis, by whom the ceremony had been performed, and whom Heathcote had no difficulty in recognising in the person of his visitant. This document, and the prompt personal visit of the two men, and above all, the known identity of the Franciscan, satisfied Heathcote as fully as any thing short of complete publicity could have done. And his conviction was not a mistaken one.

Dwyer, before he took his leave, impressed upon Heathcote the necessity of keeping the affair so secret as to render it impossible that it should reach Colonel O'Mara's ears, an event which would have been attended with ruinous consequences to all parties. He refused also to permit Heathcote to see his daughter, and even to tell him where she was, until circumstances rendered it safe for him to visit her.

Heathcote was a harsh and sullen man; and though his temper was any thing but tractable, there was so much to please, almost to dazzle him, in the event, that he accepted the terms which Dwyer imposed upon him without any further token of disapprobation than a shake of the head, and a gruff wish that "it might prove all for the best."

Nearly two months had passed, and young O'Mara had not yet departed for England. His letters had been strangely few and far between; and in short his conduct was such as to induce Colonel O'Mara to hasten his return to Ireland, and at the same time to press an engagement, which Lord ——, his son, Captain N——, and Lady Emily had made to spend some weeks with him at his residence in Dublin. A letter arrived for young O'Mara, stating the arrangement, and requiring his attendance in Dublin, which was accordingly immediately afforded.

He arrived, with Dwyer, in time to

welcome his father and his distinguished guests. He resolved to break off his embarrassing connexion with Lady Emily, without, however, stating the real motive, which he felt would exasperate the resentment which his father and Lord —— would no doubt feel at his conduct. He strongly felt how dishonourably he would act, if, in obedience to Dwyer's advice, he seemed tacitly to acquiesce in an engagement which it was impossible for him to fulfil. He knew that Lady Emily was not capable of any thing like strong attachment; and that even if she were, he had no reason whatever to suppose that she cared at all for him. He had not at any time desired the alliance; nor had he any reason to suppose the young lady in any degree less indifferent. He regarded it now, and not without some appearance of justice, as nothing more than a kind of understood stipulation entered into by their parents, and to be considered rather as a matter of business and calculation than as involving any thing of mutual inclination on the part of the parties most nearly interested in the matter. He anxiously, therefore, watched for an opportunity of making known his feelings to Lord ——, as he could not with propriety do so to Lady Emily; but what at a distance appeared to be a matter of easy accomplishment, now, upon a nearer approach, and when the immediate impulse which had prompted the act had subsided, appeared so full of difficulty and almost inextricable embarrassments, that he involuntarily shrunk from the task day after day. Though it was a source of indescribable anxiety to him, he did not venture to write to Ellen, for he could not disguise from himself the danger which the secrecy of his connexion with her must incur by his communicating with her, even through a public office, where their letters might be permitted to lie longer than the gossiping inquisitiveness of a country town would warrant him in supposing safe.

It was about a fortnight after young O'Mara had arrived in Dublin, where all things, and places, and amusements, and persons seemed thoroughly stale, flat, and unprofitable, when one day, tempted by the unusual fineness of the weather, Lady Emily proposed a walk in the College Park—a favourite promenade at that time She, therefore, with young O'Mara, accompanied by Dwyer (who, by the by, when he pleased, could act the gentleman sufficiently well) proceeded to the place proposed, where they continued to walk for some time.

"Why, Richard," said Lady Emily, after a tedious and unbroken pause of some minutes, "you are becoming worse and worse every day; you are growing absolutely intolerable; perfectly stupid; not one good thing have I heard since I left the house."

O'Mara smiled, and was seeking for a suitable reply, when his design was interrupted, and his attention suddenly and painfully arrested by the appearance of two figures, who were slowly passing the broad walk on which he and his party moved; the one was that of Captain N——, the other was the form of—Martin Heathcote!

O'Mara felt confounded, almost stunned; the anticipation of some impending mischief—of an immediate and violent collision with a young man whom he had ever regarded as his friend, were apprehensions which such a juxta position could not fail to produce.

"Is Heathcote mad?" thought he. "What devil can have brought him here?"

Dwyer having exchanged a significant glance with O'Mara, said slightly to Lady Emily, "will your ladyship excuse me for a moment. I have a word to say to Captain N——, and will, with your permission, immediately rejoin you." He bowed, and walking rapidly on, was in a few moments beside the object of his and his patron's uneasiness.

Whatever Heathcote's object might be, he certainly had not yet declared the secret—whose safety O'Mara had so naturally desired—for Captain N—— appeared in good spirits; and on coming up to his sister and her companion, he joined them for a moment, telling O'Mara, laughingly, that an old quiz had come from the country for the express purpose of telling tales, as it was to be supposed, of him (young O'Mara) in whose neighbourhood he lived.

During this speech, it required all the effort which it was possible to exert, to prevent O'Mara's betraying the extreme agitation to which his situation gave rise. Captain N——, however, suspected nothing, and passed on without further delay.

Dinner was an early meal in those days, and Lady Emily was obliged to leave the Park in less than half an hour after the unpleasant meeting which we have just mentioned. Young O'Mara and, at a sign from him, Dwyer having escorted the lady to the door of Colonel O'Mara's house, pretended an engagement, and departed together.

Richard O'Mara instantly questioned his comrade upon the subject of his anxiety; but Dwyer had nothing to communicate of a satisfactory nature. He had only time, while the Captain had been engaged with Lady Emily and her companion, to say to Heathcote, "Be secret as you value your existence: every thing will be right, if you be but secret."

To this Heathcote had replied, "Never fear me, I understand what I am about."

This was said in such an ambiguous manner that it was impossible to conjecture whether he intended or not to act upon Dwyer's exhortation. The conclusion which appeared most natural, was by no means an agreeable one. It was much to be feared that Heathcote having heard some vague report of O'Mara's engagement with Lady Emily, perhaps exaggerated by the repetition, into a speedily approaching marriage, had become alarmed for his daughter's interest, and had taken this decisive step, in order to prevent, by a disclosure of the circumstances of his clandestine union with Ellen, the possibility of his completing a guilty alliance with Captain N——'s sister. If he entertained the suspicions which they attributed to him, he had certainly taken the most effectual means to prevent their being realised. Whatever his object might be, his presence in Dublin, in company with Captain N——, boded nothing good to O'Mara.

They entered ——'s tavern, in Dame-street, together, and there, over a hasty, and by no means a comfortable meal, they talked over their plans and conjectures. Evening closed in, and found them still closeted together, with nothing to interrupt, and a large tankard of claret to sustain their desultory conversation. Nothing had been determined upon, except that Dwyer and O'Mara should proceed under cover of the darkness to search the town for Heathcote, and by minute inquiries at the most frequented houses of entertainment, to ascertain his place of residence, in order to procuring a full and explanatory interview with him. They had each filled their last glass, and were sipping it slowly, seated with their feet stretched towards a bright cheerful fire; the small table which sustained the flagon, of which we have spoken, together with two pair of wax candles, placed between them, so as to afford a convenient resting place for the long glasses out of which they drank.

"One good result, at all events, will be effected by Heathcote's visit," said O'Mara. "Before twenty-four hours I shall do that which I should have done long ago. I shall, without reserve, state every thing. I can no longer endure this suspense—this dishonourable secrecy—this apparent dissimulation. Every moment I have passed since my departure from the country has been one of embarrassment, of pain, of humiliation. On to-morrow I will brave the storm, whether successfully or not, is doubtful; but I had rather walk the high roads a beggar, than submit a day longer to be made the degraded sport of every accident—the miserable dependent upon a successful system of deception. Though *passive* deception, it is still unmanly, unworthy, unjustifiable deception. I cannot bear to think of it. I despise myself, but I will cease to be the despicable thing I have become. To-morrow sees me free, and this harassing subject for ever at rest."

He was interrupted here by the sound of footsteps heavily but rapidly ascending the tavern staircase. The room door opened, and Captain N——, accompanied by a fashionably-attired young man, entered the room.

Young O'Mara had risen from his seat on the entrance of their unexpected visitants; and the moment Captain N—— recognised his person, an evident and ominous change passed over his countenance. He turned hastily to withdraw, but, as it seemed, almost instantly changed his mind, for he turned again abruptly.

"This chamber is engaged, sir," said the waiter.

"Leave the room, sir," was his only reply.

"The room is engaged, sir," repeated the waiter, probably believing that his first suggestion had been unheard.

"Leave the room, or go to hell," shouted Captain N——, at the same time seizing the astounded waiter by the shoulder, he hurled him headlong upon the passage, and flung the door to, with a crash that shook the walls. "Sir," continued he, addressing himself to O'Mara, "I did not hope to have met you until to-morrow. Fortune has been kind to me—draw, and defend yourself." At the same time he drew his sword, and placed himself in an attitude of attack.

"I will not draw upon *you*," said O'Mara. "I have, indeed, wronged you. I have given you just cause for resentment; but against your life I will never lift my hand."

"You are a coward, sir," replied Captain N——, with almost frightful vehemence, "as every trickster and swindler *is*. You are a contemptible dastard—a despicable, damned villain. Draw your sword, sir, and defend your life, or every post and pillar in this town shall tell your infamy."

"Perhaps," said his friend, with a sneer, "the gentleman can do better without his honour than without his wife."

"Yes," shouted the Captain, "his wife—a trull—a common——"

"Silence, sir," cried O'Mara, all the fierceness of his nature roused by this last insult—"your object is gained; your blood be upon your own head"—at the same time he sprung across a bench which stood in his way, and pushing aside the table which supported the lights, in an instant their swords crossed, and they were engaged in close and deadly strife.

Captain N—— was far the stronger of the two; but, on the other hand, O'Mara possessed far more skill in the use of the fatal weapon which they employed. But the narrowness of the room rendered this advantage hardly available. Almost instantly O'Mara received a slight wound upon the forehead, which, though little more than a scratch, bled so fast as to obstruct his sight considerably. Those who have used the foil can tell how slight a derangement of eye or of hand is sufficient to determine a contest of this kind; and this knowledge will prevent their being surprised when I say, that, spite of O'Mara's superior skill and practice, his adversary's sword passed twice through and through his body, and he fell heavily and helplessly upon the floor of the chamber. Without saying a word, the successful combatant quitted the room along with his companion, leaving Dwyer to shift as best he might for his fallen comrade.

With the assistance of some of the wondering menials of the place, Dwyer succeeded in conveying the wounded man into an adjoining room, where he was laid upon a bed, in a state bordering upon insensibility—the blood flowing, I might say *welling*, from the wounds so fast as to show that unless the bleeding were speedily and effectually stopped, he could not live for half an hour. Medical aid was, of course, instantly procured, and Colonel O'Mara, though at the time seriously indisposed, was urgently requested to attend without loss of time. He did so; but human succour and support were all too late. The wound had been truly dealt—the tide of life had ebbed; and his father had not arrived five minutes when young O'Mara was a corpse. His body rests in the vaults of Christ Church, in Dublin, without a stone to mark the spot.

The counsels of the wicked are always dark and their motives often beyond fathoming; and strange, unaccountable, incredible as it may seem, I do believe, and that upon evidence so clear as to amount almost to demonstration, that Heathcote's visit to Dublin—his betrayal of the secret—and the final and terrible catastrophe which laid O'Mara in the grave, were brought about by no other agent than Dwyer himself. I have, myself, seen the letter which induced that visit. The handwriting is exactly what I have seen in other alleged specimens of Dwyer's penmanship. It is written with an affectation of honest alarm at O'Mara's conduct, and expresses a conviction that if some of Lady Emily's family be not informed of O'Mara's real situation, nothing could prevent his concluding with her an advantageous alliance, then upon the *tapis*, and altogether throwing off his allegiance to Ellen—a step which, as the writer candidly asserted, would finally conduce as inevitably to his own disgrace as it would immediately do to her ruin and misery. The production was formally signed with Dwyer's name, and the postscript contained a strict injunction of secrecy, asserting that if it were ascertained that such an epistle had been despatched from such a quarter, it would be attended with the total ruin of the writer. It is true that Dwyer, many years after, when this letter came to light, alleged it to be a forgery, an assertion whose truth, even to his dying hour, and long after he had apparently ceased to feel the lash of public scorn, he continued obstinately to maintain. Indeed this matter is full of mystery, for, revenge alone excepted, which, I believe, in such minds as Dwyers, seldom overcomes the sense of interest, the only intelligible motive which could have prompted him to such an act was the hope that since he had, through young O'Mara's interest, procured from the Colonel a lease of a small farm upon the terms which he had originally stipulated, he might prosecute his plan touching the property of Martin Heathcote, rendering his daughter's hand free by the removal of young O'Mara. This appears to me too complicated a plan of villany to have entered the mind even of such a man as Dwyer. I must, therefore, suppose his motives to have originated out of circumstances connected with this story which may not have come to my ear, and perhaps never will.

Colonel O'Mara felt the death of his son more deeply than I should have thought possible, but that son had been the last being who had continued to interest his cold heart. Perhaps the pride which he felt in his child had in it more of selfishness than of any generous feeling. But, be this as it may, the melancholy circumstances connected with Ellen Heathcote had reached him, and his conduct towards her proved, more strongly than any thing else could have done, that he felt keenly and justly, and, to a certain degree, with a softened heart, the fatal event of which she had been, in some manner, alike the cause and the victim. He evinced not towards her, as might have been expected, any unreasonable resentment. On the contrary, he exhibited great consideration, even tenderness for her situation; and having ascertained where his son had placed her, he issued strict orders that she should not be disturbed, and that the fatal tidings, which had not yet reached her, should be withheld until they might be communicated in such a way as to soften, as much as possible, the inevitable shock.

These last directions were acted upon too scrupulously and too long; and, indeed, I am satisfied that had the event been communicated at once, however terrible and overwhelming the shock might have been, much of the bitterest anguish, of sickening doubts, of harassing suspense, would have been spared her, and that the first tempestuous burst of sorrow having passed over, her chastened spirit might have recovered its tone, and her life have been spared. But the mistaken kindness which concealed from her the dreadful truth, instead of relieving her mind of a burden which it could not support, laid upon it a weight of horrible fears and doubts as to the affection of O'Mara, compared with which even the certainty of his death would have been tolerable.

One evening I had just seated myself beside a cheerful turf fire, with that true relish which a long cold ride through a bleak and shelterless country affords, stretching my chilled limbs to meet the genial influence, and imbibing the warmth at every pore, when my comfortable meditations were interrupted by a long and sonorous ringing at the door bell, evidently effected by no timid hand. A messenger had arrived to request my attendance at the Lodge—such was the name which distinguished a small and somewhat antiquated building, occupying a peculiarly secluded position among the bleak and heathy hills, which varied the surface of that not altogether uninteresting district, and which had, I believe, been employed by the keen and hardy ancestors of the O'Mara family, as a convenient temporary residence during the sporting season. Thither my attendance was required, in order to administer to a deeply distressed lady such comforts as an afflicted mind can gather from the sublime hopes and consolations of Christianity. I had long suspected that the occupant of this sequestered, I might say desolate, dwelling-house was the poor girl whose brief story we are following; and feeling a keen interest in her fate, as who that had ever seen her *did not*, I started from my comfortable seat with more eager alacrity than, I will confess it, I might have evinced, had my duty called me in another direction. In a few minutes I was trotting rapidly onward, preceded by my guide, who urged his horse with the remorseless rapidity of one who seeks by the speed of his progress, to escape observation. Over roads and through bogs we splashed and clattered, until at length traversing the brow of a wild and rocky hill, whose aspect seemed so barren and forbidding, that it might have been a lasting barrier alike to mortal sight and step, the lonely building became visible, lying in a kind of swampy flat, with a broad reedy pond or lake stretching away to its side, and backed by a farther range of monotonous sweeping hills, marked with irregular lines of grey rock, which, in the distance, bore a rude and colossal resemblance to the walls of a fortification. Riding with undiminished speed along a kind of wild horse-track, we turned the corner of a high and somewhat ruinous wall of loose stones, and making a sudden wheel we found ourselves in a small quadrangle, surmounted on two sides by dilapidated stables and kennels, on another by a broken stone wall, and upon the fourth by the front of the lodge itself. The whole character of the place was that of dreary desertion and decay, which would of itself have predisposed the mind for melancholy impressions. My guide dismounted, and with respectful attention held my horse's bridle while I got down; and knocking at the door with the handle of his whip, it was speedily opened by a neatly dressed female domestic, and I was admitted to the interior of the house, and conducted into a small room, where a fire in some degree dispelled the cheerless air, which would otherwise have prevailed to a painful degree throughout the place.

I had been waiting but for a very few minutes, when another female servant, somewhat older than the first, entered the room. She made some apology on the part of the person whom I had come to visit, for the slight delay which had already occurred, and requested me further to wait for a few minutes longer, intimating that the lady's grief was so violent, that without great effort she could not bring herself to speak calmly at all. As if to beguile the time, the good dame went on, in a highly communicative strain, to tell me amongst much that could not interest me, a little of what I had desired to hear. I discovered that the grief of her whom I had come to visit, was excited by the sudden death of a little boy, her only child, who was then lying dead in his mother's chamber.

"And the mother's name," said I, inquiringly.

The woman looked at me for a moment, smiled, and shook her head with the air of mingled mystery and importance which seems to say, "I am unfathomable." I did not care to press the question, though I suspected that much of her apparent reluctance was affected, knowing that my doubts respecting the identity of the person whom I had come to visit must soon be set at rest; and after a little pause the worthy Abigail went on as fluently as ever. She told me that her young mistress had been, for the time she had been with her, that was for about a year and a half, in declining health and spirits, and that she had loved her little child to a degree beyond expression—so devotedly that she could not, in all probability, survive it long. While she was running on in this way the bell rang, and signing me to follow, she opened the room door, but stopped in the hall, and taking me a little aside, and speaking in a whisper, she told me, as I valued the life of the poor lady, not to say one word of the death of young O'Mara. I nodded acquiescence, and ascending a narrow and ill-constructed staircase, she stopped at a chamber door and knocked.

"Come in," said a gentle voice from within, and, preceded by my conductress, I entered a moderately sized, but rather gloomy chamber. There was but one living form within it—it was the light and graceful figure of a young female. She had risen as I entered the room; but owing to the obscurity of the apartment, and to the circumstance that her face, as she looked towards the door, was turned away from the light which found its way in dimly through the narrow windows, I could not instantly recognise the features.

"You do not remember me, sir?" said the same low mournful voice. "I am—I *was*—Ellen Heathcote."

"I do remember you, my poor child," said I taking her hand; "I do remember you very well. Speak to me frankly—speak to me as a friend. Whatever I can do or say for you, is yours already, only speak."

"You were always very kind, sir, to those—to those that *wanted* kindness." The tears were almost overflowing, but she checked them, and as if an accession of fortitude had followed the momentary weakness, she continued, in a subdued but firm tone, to tell me briefly the circumstances of her marriage with O'Mara. When she had concluded the recital, she paused for a moment, and I asked again—

"Can I aid you in any way—by advice or otherwise?"

"I wish, sir, to tell you all I have been thinking about," she continued. "I am sure, sir, that Master Richard loved me once—I am sure he did not think to deceive me; but there were bad, hard-hearted people about him, and his family were all rich and high, and I am sure he wishes *now* that he had never, never seen me. Well, sir, it is not in my heart to blame him; what was *I* that I should look at him?

—an ignorant, poor, country girl—and he so high, and great, and so beautiful—the blame was all mine—it was all my fault; I could not think or hope he would care for me more than a little time. Well, sir, I thought over and over again, that since his love was gone from me for ever, I should not stand in his way, and hinder whatever great things his family wished for him, so I thought often and often to write him a letter to get the marriage broken, and to send me home; but for one reason I would have done it long ago—there was a little child, his and mine—the dearest, the loveliest." She could not go on for a minute or two. "The little child that is lying there, on that bed; but it is dead and gone, and there is no reason *now* why I should delay any more about it."

She put her hand into her breast, and took out a letter, which she opened. She put it into my hands—it ran thus:—

"Dear Master Richard—My little child is dead, and your happiness is all I care about now. Your marriage with me is displeasing to your family, and I would be a burden to you, and in your way in the fine places, and among the great friends where you must be. You ought, therefore, to break the marriage, and I will sign whatever *you* wish or your family. I will never try to blame you, Master Richard—do not think it, for I never deserved your love, and must not complain now that I have lost it; but I will always pray for you, and be thinking of you while I live."

While I read this letter, I was satisfied that so far from adding to the poor girl's grief, a full disclosure of what had happened would, on the contrary, mitigate her sorrow, and deprive it of its sharpest sting.

"Ellen," said I solemnly, "Richard O'Mara was never unfaithful to you—he is now where human reproach can reach him no more."

"As I said this the hectic flush upon her cheek gave place to a paleness so deadly, that I almost thought she would drop lifeless upon the spot.

"Is he—is he dead then?" said she, wildly.

I took her hand in mine, and told her the sad story as best I could. She listened with a calmness which appeared almost unnatural, until I had finished the mournful narration. She then arose, and going to the bed-side, she drew the curtain and gazed silently and fixedly on the quiet face of the child; but the feelings which swelled at her heart could not be suppressed—the tears gushed forth, and sobbing as if her heart would break, she leant over the bed and took the dead child in her arms. She wept and kissed it, and kissed it and wept again, in grief so passionate, so heart-rending, as to draw bitter tears from my eyes. I said what little I could to calm her—to have sought to do more would have been a mockery; and observing that the darkness had closed in, I took my leave and departed, being favoured with the services of my former guide.

I expected to have been soon called upon again to visit the poor girl; but the lodge lay beyond the boundary of my parish, and I felt a reluctance to trespass upon the precincts of my brother minister, and a certain degree of hesitation in intruding upon one whose situation was so very peculiar, and who would, I had no doubt, feel no scruple in requesting my attendance if she desired it. A month, however, passed away, and I did not hear any thing of Ellen. I called at the lodge, and to my inquiries they answered that she was very much worse in health, and that since the death of the child she had been sinking fast, and so weak that she had been chiefly confined to her bed. I sent frequently to inquire, and often called myself, and all that I heard convinced me that she was rapidly sinking into the grave.

Late one night I was summoned from my rest, by a visit from the person who had upon the former occasion acted as my guide; he had come to summon me to the death-bed of her whom I had then attended. With all celerity I made my preparations, and not without considerable difficulty and some danger, we made a rapid night-ride to the lodge, a distance of five miles at least. We arrived safely, and in a very short time—but too late.

I stood by the bed upon which lay the once beautiful form of Ellen Heathcote. The brief but sorrowful trial was past—the desolate mourner was gone to that land where the pangs of grief, the tumults of passion, regrets, and cold neglect are felt no more. I leant over the lifeless face, and scanned the beautiful features which living had wrought such magic on all that looked upon them. They were, indeed, much wasted; but it was impossible for the fingers of death or of decay altogether to obliterate the traces of that exquisite beauty which had so distinguished her. As I gazed on this most sad and striking spectacle, remembrances thronged fast upon my mind, and tear after tear fell upon the cold form that slept tranquilly and for ever. A few days afterwards I was told that a funeral had left the lodge at the dead of night, and had been conducted with the most scrupulous secrecy—it was, of course, to me no mystery.

Heathcote lived to a very advanced age, being of that hard mould which is not easily impressible. The selfish and the hard-hearted survive where nobler, more generous, and, above all, more sympathizing natures would have sunk for ever.

Dwyer certainly succeeded in extorting, I cannot say how, considerable and advantageous leases from Colonel O'Mara; but after his death, he disposed of his interest in these, and having for a time launched into a sea of profligate extravagance, he became bankrupt, and for a long time I totally lost sight of him. The rebellion of '98, and the events which immediately followed, called him forth from his lurking-places in the character of an informer; and I myself have seen the hoary-headed, paralytic perjurer, with a scowl of derision and defiance, brave the hootings and the execrations of the indignant multitude.

STRANGE EVENT IN THE LIFE OF SCHALKEN THE PAINTER.

BEING A SEVENTH EXTRACT FROM THE LEGACY OF THE LATE FRANCIS PURCELL, P.P. OF DRUMCOOLAGH.

You will, no doubt, be surprised, my dear friend, at the subject of the following narrative. What had I to do with Schalken, or Schalken with me? He had returned to his native land, and was probably dead and buried before I was born; I never visited Holland nor spoke with a native of that country. So much I believe you already know. I must, then, give you my authority, and state to you frankly the ground upon which rests the credibility of the strange story which I am about to lay before you. I was acquainted, in my early days, with a Captain Vandael, whose father had served King William in the Low Countries, and also in my own unhappy land during the Irish campaigns. I know not how it happened that I liked this man's society spite of his politics and religion: but so it was; and it was by means of the free intercourse to which our intimacy gave rise that I became possessed of the curious tale which you are about to hear. I had often been struck, while visiting Vandael, by a remarkable picture, in which, though no *connoisseur* myself, I could not fail to discern some very strong peculiarities, particularly in the distribution of light and shade, as also a certain oddity in the design itself, which interested my curiosity. It represented the interior of what might be a chamber in some antique religious building—the foreground was occupied by a female figure, arrayed in a species of white robe, part of which is arranged so as to form a veil. The dress, however, is not strictly that of any religious order. In its hand the figure bears a lamp, by whose light alone the form and face are illuminated; the features are marked by an arch smile, such as pretty women wear when engaged in successfully practising some roguish trick; in the back ground, and, excepting where the dim red light of an expiring fire serves to define the form, totally in the shade, stands the figure of a man equipped in the old fashion, with doublet and so forth, in an attitude of alarm, his hand being placed upon the hilt of his sword, which he appears to be in the act of drawing.

"There are some pictures," said I to my friend, "which impress one, I know not how, with a conviction that they represent not the mere ideal shapes and combinations which have floated through the imagination of the artist, but scenes, faces, and situations which have actually existed. When I look upon that picture, something assures me that I behold the representation of a reality."

Vandael smiled, and, fixing his eyes upon the painting musingly, he said—

"Your fancy has not deceived you, my good friend, for that picture is the record, and I believe a faithful one, of a remarkable and mysterious occurrence. It was painted by Schalken, and contains, in the face of the female figure, which occupies the most prominent place in the design, an accurate portrait of Rose Velderkaust, the niece of Gerard Douw, the first, and, I believe, the only love of Godfrey Schalken. My father knew the painter well, and from Schalken himself he learned the story of the mysterious drama, one scene of which the picture has embodied. This painting, which is accounted a fine specimen of Schalken's style, was bequeathed to my father by the artist's will, and, as you have observed, is a very striking and interesting production."

I had only to request Vandael to tell the story of the painting in order to be gratified; and thus it is that I am enabled to submit to you a faithful recital of what I heard myself, leaving you to reject or to allow the evidence upon which the truth of the tradition depends, with this one assurance, that Schalken was an honest, blunt Dutchman, and, I believe, wholly incapable of committing a flight of imagination; and further, that Vandael, from whom I heard the story, appeared firmly convinced of its truth.

There are few forms upon which the mantle of mystery and romance could seem to hang more ungracefully than upon that of the uncouth and clownish Schalken—the Dutch boor—the rude and dogged, but most cunning worker of oils, whose pieces delight the initiated of the present day almost as much as his manners disgusted the refined of his own; and yet this man, so rude, so dogged, so slovenly, I had almost said so savage, in mien and manner, during his after successes, had been selected by the capricious goddess, in his early life, to figure as the hero of a romance by no means devoid of interest or of mystery. Who can tell how meet he may have been in his young days to play the part of the lover or of the hero—who can say that in early life he had been the same harsh, *unlicked*, and rugged boor which, in his maturer age, he proved—or how far the neglected rudeness which afterwards marked his air, and garb, and manners, may not have been the growth of that reckless apathy not unfrequently produced by bitter misfortunes and disappointments in early life? These questions can never now be answered. We must content ourselves, then, with a plain statement of facts, or what have been received and transmitted as such, leaving matters of speculation to those who like them.

When Schalken studied under the immortal Gerard Douw, he was a young man; and in spite of the phlegmatic constitution and unexcitable manner which he shared (we believe) with his countrymen, he was not incapable of deep and vivid impressions, for it is an established fact that the young painter looked with considerable interest upon the beautiful niece of his wealthy master. Rose Velderkaust was very young, having, at the period of which we speak, not yet attained her seventeenth year, and, if tradition speaks truth, possessed all the soft dimpling charms of the fair, light-haired Flemish maidens. Schalken had not studied long in the school of Gerard Douw, when he felt this interest deepening into something of a keener and intenser feeling than was quite consistent with the tranquillity of his honest Dutch heart; and at the same time he perceived, or thought he perceived, flattering symptoms of a reciprocity of liking, and this was quite sufficient to determine whatever indecision he might have heretofore experienced, and to lead him to devote exclusively to her every hope and feeling of his heart. In short, he was as much in love as a Dutchman could be. He was not long in making his passion known to the pretty maiden herself, and his declaration was followed by a corresponding confession upon her part. Schalken, however, was a poor man, and he possessed no counterbalancing advantages of birth or otherwise to induce the old man to consent to a union which must involve his niece and ward in the strugglings and difficulties of a young and nearly friendless artist. He was, therefore, to wait until time had furnished him with opportunity and accident with success; and then, if his labours were found sufficiently lucrative, it was to be hoped that his proposals might at least be listened to by her jealous guardian. Months passed away, and, cheered by the smiles of the little Rose, Schalken's labours were redoubled, and with such effect and improvement as reasonably to promise the realization of his hopes, and no contemptible eminence in his art, before many years should have elapsed.

The even course of this cheering prosperity was, however, destined to experience a sudden and formidable interruption, and that, too, in a manner so strange and mysterious as to baffle all investigation, and throw upon the events themselves a shadow of almost supernatural horror.

Schalken had one evening remained in the master's *studio* considerably longer than his more volatile companions, who had gladly availed themselves of the excuse which the dusk of evening afforded, to withdraw from their several tasks, in order to finish a day of labour in the jollity and conviviality of the tavern. But Schalken worked for improvement, or rather for love. Besides, he was now engaged merely in sketching a design, an operation which, unlike that of colouring, might be continued as long as there was light sufficient to distinguish between canvas and charcoal. He had not then, nor, indeed, until long after, discovered the peculiar powers of his pencil, and he was engaged in composing a group of extremely roguish-looking and grotesque imps and demons, who were inflicting various ingenious torments upon a perspiring and pot-bellied St. Anthony, who reclined in the midst of them, apparently in the last stage of drunkenness. The young artist, however, though incapable of executing, or even of appreciating, any thing of true sublimity, had, nevertheless, discernment enough to prevent his being by any means satisfied with his work; and many were the patient erasures and corrections which the limbs and features of saint and devil underwent, yet all without producing in their new arrangement any thing of improvement or increased effect. The large, old-fashioned room was silent, and, with the exception of himself, quite deserted by its usual inmates. An hour had passed—nearly two—without any improved result. Daylight had already declined, and twilight was fast giving way to the darkness of night. The patience of the young man was exhausted, and he stood before his unfinished production, absorbed in no very pleasing ruminations, one hand buried in the folds of his long dark hair, and the other holding the piece of charcoal which had so ill executed its office, and which he now rubbed, without much regard to the sable streaks which it produced, with irritable pressure upon his ample Flemish inexpressibles.—"Pshaw!" said the young man aloud, "would that picture, devils, saint, and all, were where they should be—in hell!" A short, sudden laugh, uttered startlingly close to his ear, instantly responded to the ejaculation. The artist turned sharply round, and now for the first time became aware that his labours had been overlooked by a stranger. Within about a yard and half, and rather behind him, there stood what was, or appeared to be, the figure of an elderly man: he wore a short cloak, and broad-brimmed hat, with a conical crown, and in his hand, which was protected with a heavy, gauntlet-shaped glove, he carried a long ebony walking-stick, surmounted with what appeared, as it glittered dimly in the twilight, to be a massive head of gold, and upon the breast, through the folds of the cloak, there shone what appeared to be the links of a rich chain of the same metal. The room was so obscure that nothing further of the appearance of the figure could be ascertained, and the face was altogether overshadowed by the heavy flap of the beaver which overhung it, so that not a feature could be discerned. A quantity of dark hair escaped from beneath this sombre hat, a circumstance which, connected with the firm, upright carriage of the intruder, proved that his years could not yet exceed threescore or thereabouts. There was an air of gravity and importance about the garb of this person, and something indescribably odd, I might say awful, in the perfect, stone-like movelessness of the figure, that effectually checked the testy comment which had at once risen to the lips of the irritated artist. He, therefore, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered the surprise, asked the stranger, civilly, to be seated, and desired to know if he had any message to leave for his master.

"Tell Gerard Douw," said the unknown, without altering his attitude in the smallest degree, "that Minheer Vanderhausen, of Rotterdam, desires to speak with him on to-morrow evening at this hour, and, if he please, in this room, upon matters of weight—that is all—good night."

The stranger, having finished this message, turned abruptly, and, with a quick but silent step quitted the room, before Schalken had time to say a word in reply. The young man felt a curiosity to see in what direction the burgher of Rotterdam would turn on quitting the *studio*, and for that purpose he went directly to the window which commanded the door. A lobby of considerable extent intervened between the inner door of the painter's room and the street entrance, so that Schalken occupied the post of observation before the old man could possibly have reached the street. He watched in vain, however. There was no other mode of exit. Had the old man vanished, or was he lurking about the recesses of the lobby for some bad purpose? This last suggestion filled the mind of Schalken with a vague horror, which was so unaccountably intense as to make him alike afraid to remain in the room alone and reluctant to pass through the lobby. However, with an effort which appeared very disproportioned to the occasion, he summoned resolution to leave the room, and, having double-locked the door and thrust the key in his pocket, without looking to the right or left, he traversed the passage which had so recently, perhaps still, contained the person of his mysterious visitant, scarcely venturing to breathe till he had arrived in the open street.

"Minheer Vanderhausen," said Gerard Douw within himself, as the appointed hour approached, "Minheer Vanderhausen of Rotterdam! I never heard of the man till yesterday. What can he want of me? A portrait, perhaps, to be painted; or a younger son or a poor relation to be apprenticed; or a collection to be valued; or—pshaw, there's no one in Rotterdam to leave me a legacy. Well, whatever the business may be, we shall soon know it all."

It was now the close of day, and every easel, except that of Schalken, was deserted. Gerard Douw was pacing the apartment with the restless step of impatient expectation, every now and then humming a passage from a piece of music which he was himself composing; for, though no great proficient, he admired the art; sometimes pausing to glance over the work of one of his absent pupils, but more frequently placing himself at the window, from whence he might observe the passengers who threaded the obscure by-street in which his studio was placed.

"Said you not, Godfrey," exclaimed Douw, after a long and fruitless gaze from his post of observation, and turning to Schalken—"said you not the hour of appointment was at about seven by the clock of the Stadhouse?"

"It had just told seven when I first saw him, sir," answered the student.

"The hour is close at hand, then," said the master, consulting a horologe as large and as round as a full-grown orange. "Minheer Vanderhausen from Rotterdam—is it not so?"

"Such was the name."

"And an elderly man, richly clad?" continued Douw.

"As well as I might see," replied his pupil; "he could not be young, nor yet very old neither, and his dress was rich and grave, as might become a citizen of wealth and consideration."

At this moment the sonorous boom of the Stadhouse clock told, stroke after stroke, the hour of seven; the eyes of both master and student were directed to the door; and it was not until the last peal of the old bell had ceased to vibrate, that Douw exclaimed—

"So, so; we shall have his worship presently—that is, if he means to keep his hour; if not, thou may'st wait for him, Godfrey, if you court the acquaintance of a capricious burgomaster; as for me, I think our old Leyden contains a sufficiency of such commodities, without an importation from Rotterdam."

Schalken laughed, as in duty bound; and after a pause of some minutes, Douw suddenly exclaimed—

"What if it should all prove a jest, a piece of mummery got up by Vankarp, or some such worthy. I wish you had run all risks, and cudgelled the old burgomaster, stadholder, or whatever else he may be, soundly. I would wager a dozen of Rhenish, his worship would have pleaded old acquaintance before the third application."

"Here he comes, sir," said Schalken, in a low admonitory tone; and instantly upon turning towards the door, Gerard Douw observed the same figure which had, on the day before, so unexpectedly greeted the vision of his pupil Schalken.

There was something in the air and mien of the figure which at once satisfied the painter that there was no *mummery* in the case, and that he really stood in the presence of a man of worship; and so, without hesitation, he doffed his cap, and, courteously saluting the stranger, requested him to be seated. The visitor waved his hand slightly, as if in acknowledgment of the courtesy, but remained standing.

"I have the honour to see Minheer Vanderhausen of Rotterdam?" said Gerard Douw.

"The same," was the laconic reply of his visitant.

"I understand your worship desires to speak with me," continued Douw, "and I am here by appointment to wait your commands."

"Is that a man of trust?" said Vanderhausen, turning towards Schalken, who stood at a little distance behind his master.

"Certainly," replied Gerard.

"Then let him take this box and get the nearest jeweller or goldsmith to value its contents, and let him return hither with a certificate of the valuation."

At the same time, he placed a small case about nine inches square in the hands of Gerard Douw, who was as much amazed at its weight as at the strange abruptness with which it was handed to him. In accordance with the wishes of the stranger, he delivered it into the hands of Schalken, and repeating *his* directions, despatched him upon the mission.

Schalken disposed his precious charge securely beneath the folds of his cloak, and rapidly traversing two or three narrow streets, he stopped at a corner house, the lower part of which was then occupied by the shop of a Jewish goldsmith. Schalken entered the shop, and calling the little Hebrew into the obscurity of its back recesses, he proceeded to lay before him Vanderhausen's packet. On being examined by the light of a lamp, it appeared entirely cased with lead, the outer surface of which was much scraped and soiled, and nearly white with age. This was with difficulty partially removed, and disclosed beneath a box of some dark and singularly hard wood; this, too was forced, and after the removal of two or three folds of linen, its contents proved to be a mass of golden ingots, closely packed, and, as the Jew declared, of the most perfect quality. Every ingot underwent the scrutiny of the little Jew, who seemed to feel an epicurean delight in touching and testing these morsels of the glorious metal; and each one of them was replaced in its birth with the exclamation: "*Mein Gott*, how very perfect!! not one grain of alloy—beautiful, beautiful." The task was at length finished, and the Jew certified under his hand the value of the ingots submitted to his examination, to amount to many thousand rix-dollars. With the desired document in his bosom, and the rich box of gold carefully pressed under his arm, and concealed by his cloak, he retraced his way, and entering the studio, found his master and the stranger in close conference. Schalken had no sooner left the room, in order to execute the commission he had taken in charge, than Vanderhausen addressed Gerard Douw in the following terms—

"I may not tarry with you to-night more than a few minutes, and so I shall briefly tell you the matter upon which I come. You visited the town of Rotterdam some four months ago, and then I saw in the church of St. Lawrence your niece, Rose Velderkaust. I desire to marry her, and if I satisfy you as to the fact that I am very wealthy, more wealthy than any husband you could dream of for her, I expect that you will forward my views to the utmost of your authority. If you approve my proposal, you must close with it at once, for I cannot command time enough to wait for calculations and delays."

Gerard Douw was, perhaps, as much astonished as any one could be, by the very unexpected nature of Minheer Vanderhausen's communication, but he did not give vent to any unseemly expression of surprise, for besides the motives supplied by prudence and politeness, the painter experienced a kind of chill and oppressive sensation, something like that which is supposed to affect a man who is placed unconsciously in immediate contact with something to which he has a natural antipathy—an undefined horror and dread while standing in the presence of the eccentric stranger, which made him very unwilling to say any thing which might reasonably prove offensive.

"I have no doubt," said Gerard, after two or three prefatory hems, "that the connection which you propose would prove alike advantageous and honourable to my niece; but you must be aware that she has a will of her own, and may not acquiesce in what *we* may design for her advantage."

"Do not seek to deceive me, sir painter," said Vanderhausen; "you are her guardian—she is your ward—she is mine if *you* like to make her so."

The man of Rotterdam moved forward a little as he spoke, and Gerard Douw, he scarce knew why, inwardly prayed for the speedy return of Schalken.

"I desire," said the mysterious gentleman, "to place in your hands at once an evidence of my wealth, and a security for my liberal dealing with your niece. The lad will return in a minute or two with a sum in value five times the fortune which she has a right to expect from a husband. This shall lie in your hands, together with her dowry, and you may apply the united sum as suits her interest best; it shall be all exclusively hers while she lives—is that liberal?"

Douw assented, and inwardly thought that fortune had been extraordinarily kind to his niece; the stranger, he thought, must be both wealthy and generous, and such an offer was not to be despised, though made by a humourist, and one of no very prepossessing presence. Rose had no very high pretensions, for she was almost without dowry; indeed altogether so, excepting so far as the deficiency had been supplied by the generosity of her uncle; neither had she any right to raise any scruples against the match on the score of birth, for her own origin was by no means elevated, and as to other objections, Gerard resolved, and, indeed, by the usages of the time, was warranted in resolving not to listen to them for a moment.

"Sir," said he, addressing the stranger, "your offer is most liberal, and whatever hesitation I may feel in closing with it immediately, arises solely from my not having the honour of knowing any thing of your family or station. Upon these points you can, of course, satisfy me without difficulty?"

"As to my respectability," said the stranger, drily, "you must take that for granted at present; pester me with no inquiries; you can discover nothing more about me than I choose to make known. You shall have sufficient security for my respectability—my word, if you are honourable: if you are sordid, my gold."

"A testy old gentleman," thought Douw, "he must have his own way; but, all things considered, I am justified in giving my niece to him; were she my own daughter, I would do the like by her. I will not pledge myself unnecessarily however."

"You will not pledge yourself unnecessarily," said Vanderhausen, strangely uttering the very words which had just floated through the mind of his companion; "but you will do so if it *is* necessary, I presume; and I will show you that I consider it indispensable. If the gold I mean to leave in your hands satisfy you, and if you desire that my proposal shall not be at once withdrawn, you must, before I leave this room, write your name to this engagement."

Having thus spoken, he placed a paper in the hands of Gerard, the contents of which expressed an engagement entered into by Gerard Douw, to give to Wilken Vanderhausen of Rotterdam, in marriage, Rose Velderkaust, and so forth, within one week of the date hereof. While the painter was employed in reading this covenant, Schalken, as we have stated, entered the studio, and having delivered the box and the valuation of the Jew, into the hands of the stranger, he was about to retire, when Vanderhausen called to him to wait; and, presenting the case and the certificate to Gerard Douw, he waited in silence until he had satisfied himself by an inspection of both as to the value of the pledge left in his hands. At length he said—

"Are you content?"

The painter said he would fain have another day to consider.

"Not an hour," said the suitor coolly.

"Well then," said Douw, "I am content—it is a bargain."

"Then sign at once," said Vanderhausen, "I am weary."

At the same time he produced a small case of writing materials, and Gerard signed the important document.

"Let this youth witness the covenant," said the old man; and Godfrey Schalken unconsciously signed the instrument which bestowed upon another that hand which he had so long regarded as the object and reward of all his labours. The compact being thus completed, the strange visitor folded up the paper, and stowed it safely in an inner pocket.

"I will visit you to-morrow night at nine of the clock, at your house, Gerard Douw, and will see the subject of our contract—farewell;" and so saying, Wilken Vanderhausen moved stiffly, but rapidly out of the room.

Schalken, eager to resolve his doubts, had placed himself by the window, in order to watch the street entrance; but the experiment served only to support his suspicions, for the old man did not issue from the door. This was very strange, very odd, very fearful; he and his master returned together, and talked but little on the way, for each had his own subjects of reflection, of anxiety, and of hope. Schalken, however, did not know the ruin which threatened his cherished schemes.

Gerard Douw knew nothing of the attachment which had sprung up between his pupil and his niece; and even if he had, it is doubtful whether he would have regarded its existence as any serious obstruction to the wishes of Minheer Vanderhausen. Marriages were then and there matters of traffic and calculation; and it would have appeared as absurd in the eyes of the guardian to make a mutual attachment an essential element in a contract of marriage, as it would have been to draw up his bonds and receipts in the language of chivalrous romance. The painter, however, did not communicate to his niece the important step which he had taken in her behalf, and his resolution arose not from any anticipation of opposition on her part, but solely from a ludicrous consciousness that if his ward were, as she very naturally might do, to ask him to describe the appearance of the bridegroom whom he destined for her, he would be forced to confess that he had not seen his face, and if called upon, would find it impossible to identify him. Upon the next day, Gerard Douw having dined, called his niece to him, and having scanned her person with an air of satisfaction, he took her hand, and looking upon her pretty, innocent face with a smile of kindness, he said—

"Rose, my girl, that face of yours will make your fortune." Rose blushed and smiled. "Such faces and such tempers seldom go together, and when they do, the compound is a love potion, which few heads or hearts can resist; trust me, thou wilt soon be a bride, girl; but this is trifling, and I am pressed for time, so make ready the large room by eight o'clock to-night, and give directions for supper at nine. I expect a friend to-night; and observe me, child, do thou trick thyself out handsomely. I would not have him think us poor or sluttish."

With these words he left the chamber, and took his way to the room to which we have already had occasion to introduce our readers—that in which his pupils worked.

When the evening closed in, Gerard called Schalken, who was about to take his departure to his obscure and comfortless lodgings, and asked him to come home and sup with Rose and Vanderhausen. The invitation was, of course, accepted, and Gerard Douw and his pupil soon found themselves in the handsome and somewhat antique-looking room which had been prepared for the reception of the stranger. A cheerful wood fire blazed in the capacious hearth; a little at one side an old-fashioned table, with richly carved legs, was placed—destined, no doubt, to receive the supper, for which preparations were going forward; and ranged with exact regularity, stood the tall-backed chairs, whose ungracefulness was more than counterbalanced by their comfort. The little party, consisting of Rose, her uncle, and the artist, awaited the arrival of the expected visitor with considerable impatience. Nine o'clock at length came, and with it a summons at the street door, which being speedily answered, was followed by a slow and emphatic tread upon the staircase; the steps moved heavily across the lobby, the door of the room in which the party which we have described were assembled slowly opened, and there entered a figure which startled, almost appalled, the phlegmatic Dutchmen, and nearly made Rose scream with affright; it was the form, and arrayed in the garb of Minheer Vanderhausen; the air, the gait, the height was the same, but the features had never been seen by any of the party before. The stranger stopped at the door of the room, and displayed his form and face completely. He wore a dark-coloured cloth cloak, which was short and full, not falling quite to the knees; his legs were cased in dark purple silk stockings, and his shoes were adorned with roses of the same colour. The opening of the cloak in front showed the under-suit to consist of some very dark, perhaps sable material, and his hands were enclosed in a pair of heavy leather gloves, which ran up considerably above the wrist, in the manner of a gauntlet. In one hand he carried his walking-stick and his hat, which he had removed, and the other hung heavily by his side. A quantity of grizzled hair descended in long tresses from his head, and its folds rested upon the plaits of a stiff ruff, which effectually concealed his neck. So far all was well; but the face!—all the flesh of the face was coloured with the bluish leaden hue, which is sometimes produced by the operation of metallic medicines, administered in excessive quantities; the eyes were enormous, and the white appeared both above and below the iris, which gave to them an expression of insanity, which was heightened by their glassy fixedness; the nose was well enough, but the mouth was writhed considerably to one side, where it opened in order to give egress to two long, discoloured fangs, which projected from the upper jaw, far below the lower lip—the hue of the lips themselves bore the usual relation to that of the face, and was, consequently, nearly black; the character of the face was malignant, even satanic, to the last degree; and, indeed, such a combination of horror could hardly be accounted for, except by supposing the corpse of some atrocious malefactor which had long hung blackening upon the gibbet to have at length become the habitation of a demon—the frightful sport of satanic possession. It was remarkable that the worshipful stranger suffered as little as possible of his flesh to appear, and that during his visit he did not once remove his gloves. Having stood for some moments at the door, Gerard Douw at length found breath and collectedness to bid him welcome, and with a mute inclination of the head, the stranger stepped forward into the room. There was something indescribably odd, even horrible, about all his motions, something undefinable, that was unnatural, unhuman—it was as if the limbs were guided and directed by a spirit unused to the management of bodily machinery. The stranger said hardly any thing during his visit, which did not exceed half an hour; and the host himself could scarcely muster courage enough to utter the few necessary salutations and courtesies; and, indeed, such was the nervous terror which the presence of Vanderhausen inspired, that very little would have made all his entertainers fly bellowing from the room. They had not so far lost all self-possession, however, as to fail to observe two strange peculiarities of their visitor. During his stay he did not once suffer his eyelids to close, nor even to move in the slightest degree; and farther, there was a death-like stillness in his whole person, owing to the total absence of the heaving motion of the chest, caused by the process of respiration. These two peculiarities, though when told they may appear trifling, produced a very striking and unpleasant effect when seen and observed. Vanderhausen at length relieved the painter of Leyden of his inauspicious presence; and with no small gratification the little party heard the street door close after him.

"Dear uncle," said Rose, "what a frightful man! I would not see him again for the wealth of the States."

"Tush, foolish girl," said Douw, whose sensations were any thing but comfortable. "A man may be as ugly as the devil, and yet if his heart and actions are good, he is worth all the pretty-faced, perfumed puppies that walk the Mall. Rose, my girl, it is very true he has not thy pretty face, but I know him to be wealthy and liberal; and were he ten times more ugly"—("which is inconceivable," observed Rose)—"these two virtues would be sufficient," continued her uncle, "to counterbalance all his deformity, and if not of power sufficient actually to alter the shape of the features, at least of efficacy enough to prevent one thinking them amiss."

"Do you know uncle," said Rose, "when I saw him standing at the door, I could not get it out of my head that I saw the old, painted, wooden figure that used to frighten me so much in the church of St. Laurence of Rotterdam."

Gerard laughed, though he could not help inwardly acknowledging the justness of the comparison. He was resolved, however, as far as he could, to check his niece's inclination to ridicule the ugliness of her intended bridegroom, although he was not a little pleased to observe that she appeared totally exempt from that mysterious dread of the stranger, which he could not disguise it from himself, considerably affected him, as also his pupil Godfrey Schalken.

Early on the next day there arrived from various quarters of the town, rich presents of silks, velvets, jewellery, and so forth, for Rose; and also a packet directed to Gerard Douw, which, on being opened, was found to contain a contract of marriage, formally drawn up, between Wilken Vanderhausen of the *Boom-quay*, in Rotterdam, and Rose Velderkaust of Leyden, niece to Gerard Douw, master in the art of painting, also of the same city; and containing engagements on the part of Vanderhausen to make settlements upon his bride, far more splendid than he had before led her guardian to believe likely, and which were to be secured to her use in the most unexceptionable manner possible—the money being placed in the hands of Gerard Douw himself.

I have no sentimental scenes to describe, no cruelty of guardians, or magnanimity of wards, or agonies of lovers. The record I have to make is one of sordidness, levity, and interest. In less than a week after the first interview which we have just described, the contract of marriage was fulfilled, and Schalken saw the prize which he would have risked any thing to secure, carried off triumphantly by his attractive rival. For two or three days he absented himself from the school; he then returned and worked, if with less cheerfulness, with far more dogged resolution than before—the slumbers of love had given place to that of ambition. Months passed away, and, contrary to his expectation, and, indeed, to the direct promise of the parties, Gerard Douw heard nothing of his niece or her worshipful spouse. The interest of the money which was to have been demanded in quarterly sums, lay unclaimed in his hands. He began to grow extremely uneasy. Minheer Vanderhausen's direction in Rotterdam he was fully possessed of; after some irresolution he finally determined to journey thither—a trifling undertaking, and easily accomplished—and thus to satisfy himself of the safety and comfort of his ward, for whom he entertained an honest and strong affection. His search was in vain, however; no one in Rotterdam had ever heard of Minheer Vanderhausen. Gerard Douw left not a house in the Boom-quay untried; but all in vain—no one could give him any information whatever touching the object of his inquiry; and he was obliged to return to Leyden nothing wiser than when he had left it. On his arrival he hastened to the establishment from which Vanderhausen had hired the lumbering, though, considering the times, most luxurious vehicle, which the bridal party had employed to convey them to Rotterdam. From the driver of this machine he learned, that having proceeded by slow stages, they had late in the evening approached Rotterdam; but that before they entered the city, and while yet nearly a mile from it, a small party of men, soberly clad, and after the old fashion, with peaked beards and mustaches, standing in the centre of the road, obstructed the further progress of the carriage. The driver reined in his horses, much fearing, from the obscurity of the hour, and the loneliness of the road, that some mischief was intended. His fears were, however, somewhat allayed by his observing that these strange men carried a large litter, of an antique shape, and which they immediately set down upon the pavement, whereupon the bridegroom, having opened the coach-door from within, descended, and having assisted his bride to do likewise, led her, weeping bitterly and wringing her hands, to the litter, which they both entered. It was then raised by the men who surrounded it, and speedily carried towards the city, and before it had proceeded many yards, the darkness concealed it from the view of the Dutch charioteer. In the inside of the vehicle he found a purse, whose contents more than thrice paid the hire of the carriage and man. He saw and could tell nothing more of Minheer Vanderhausen and his beautiful lady. This mystery was a source of deep anxiety and almost of grief to Gerard Douw. There was evidently fraud in the dealing of Vanderhausen with him, though for what purpose committed he could not imagine. He greatly doubted how far it was possible for a man possessing in his countenance so strong an evidence of the presence of the most demoniac feelings, to be in reality any thing but a villain, and every day that passed without his hearing from or of his niece, instead of inducing him to forget his fears, on the contrary tended more and more to exasperate them. The loss of his niece's cheerful society tended also to depress his spirits; and in order to dispel this despondency, which often crept upon his mind after his daily employment was over, he was wont frequently to prevail upon Schalken to accompany him home, and by his presence to dispel, in some degree, the gloom of his otherwise solitary supper. One evening, the painter and his pupil were sitting by the fire, having accomplished a comfortable supper, and had yielded to that silent pensiveness sometimes induced by the process of digestion, when their reflections were disturbed by a loud sound at the street door, as if occasioned by some person rushing forcibly and repeatedly against it. A domestic had run without delay to ascertain the cause of the disturbance, and they heard him twice or thrice interrogate the applicant for admission, but without producing an answer or any cessation of the sounds. They heard him then open the hall-door, and immediately there followed a light and rapid tread upon the staircase. Schalken laid his hand on his sword, and advanced towards the door. It opened before he reached it, and Rose rushed into the room. She looked wild and haggard, and pale with exhaustion and terror, but her dress surprised them as much even as her unexpected appearance. It consisted of a kind of white woollen wrapper, made close about the neck, and descending to the very ground. It was much deranged and travel-soiled. The poor creature had hardly entered the chamber when she fell senseless on the floor. With some difficulty they succeeded in reviving her, and on recovering her senses, she instantly exclaimed, in a tone of eager, terrified impatience—

"Wine, wine, quickly, or I'm lost."

Much alarmed at the strange agitation in which the call was made, they at once administered to her wishes, and she drank some wine with a haste and eagerness which surprised them. She had hardly swallowed it, when she exclaimed, with the same urgency,

"Food, food, at once, or I perish."

A considerable fragment of a roast joint was upon the table, and Schalken immediately proceeded to cut some, but he was anticipated, for no sooner had she become aware of its presence, than she darted at it with the rapacity of a vulture, and, seizing it in her hands, she tore off the flesh with her teeth, and swallowed it. When the paroxysm of hunger had been a little appeased, she appeared suddenly to become aware how strange her conduct had been, or it may have been that other more agitating thoughts recurred to her mind, for she began to weep bitterly and to wring her hands.

"Oh send for a minister of God," said she; "I am not safe till he comes; send for him speedily."

Gerard Douw despatched a messenger instantly, and prevailed on his niece to allow him to surrender his bedchamber to her use; he also persuaded her to retire to it at once and to rest; her consent was extorted upon the condition that they would not leave her for a moment.

"Oh that the holy man were here," she said; "he can deliver me—the dead and the living can never be one—God has forbidden it."

With these mysterious words she surrendered herself to their guidance, and they proceeded to the chamber which Gerard Douw had assigned to her use.

"Do not, do not leave me for a moment," said she; "I am lost for ever if you do."

Gerard Douw's chamber was approached through a spacious apartment, which they were now about to enter. Gerard Douw and Schalken each carried a wax candle, so that a sufficient degree of light was cast upon all surrounding objects. They were now entering the large chamber, which, as I have said, communicated with Douw's apartment, when Rose suddenly stopped, and, in a whisper which seemed to thrill with horror, she said—

"Oh, God! he is here, he is here; see, see, there he goes."

She pointed towards the door of the inner room, and Schalken thought he saw a shadowy and ill-defined form gliding into that apartment. He drew his sword, and, raising the candle so as to throw its light with increased distinctness upon the objects in the room, he entered the chamber into which the shadow had glided. No figure was there—nothing but the furniture which belonged to the room, and yet he could not be deceived as to the fact that something had moved before them into the chamber. A sickening dread came upon him, and the cold perspiration broke out in heavy drops upon his forehead; nor was he more composed, when he heard the increased urgency, the agony of entreaty, with which Rose implored them not to leave her for a moment.

"I saw him," said she; "he's here. I cannot be deceived—I know him—he's by me—he is with me—he's in the room; then, for God's sake, as you would save me, do not stir from beside me."

They at length prevailed upon her to lie down upon the bed, where she continued to urge them to stay by her. She frequently uttered incoherent sentences, repeating, again and again, "the dead and the living cannot be one—God has forbidden it;" and then again, "rest to the wakeful—sleep to the sleep-walkers." These and such mysterious and broken sentences, she continued to utter until the clergyman arrived. Gerard Douw began to fear, naturally enough, that the poor girl, owing to terror or ill-treatment, had become deranged, and he half suspected, by the suddenness of her appearance, and the unseasonableness of the hour, and, above all, from the wildness and terror of her manner, that she had made her escape from some place of confinement for lunatics, and was in immediate fear of pursuit. He resolved to summon medical advice, as soon as the mind of his niece had been in some measure set at rest by the offices of the clergyman whose attendance she had so earnestly desired; and until this object had been attained, he did not venture to put any questions to her, which might possibly, by reviving painful or horrible recollections, increase her agitation. The clergyman soon arrived—a man of ascetic countenance and venerable age—one whom Gerard Douw respected much, forasmuch as he was a veteran polemic, though one, perhaps, more dreaded as a combatant than beloved as a Christian—of pure morality, subtle brain, and frozen heart. He entered the chamber which communicated with that in which Rose reclined, and immediately on his arrival, she requested him to pray for her, as for one who lay in the hands of Satan, and who could hope for deliverance—only from heaven.

That our readers may distinctly understand all the circumstances of the event which we are about imperfectly to describe, it is necessary to state the relative position of the parties who were engaged in it. The old clergyman and Schalken were in the anti-room of which we have already spoken; Rose lay in the inner chamber, the door of which was open; and by the side of the bed, at her urgent desire, stood her guardian; a candle burned in the bedchamber, and three were lighted in the outer apartment. The old man now cleared his voice, as if about to commence, but before he had time to begin, a sudden gust of air blew out the candle which served to illuminate the room in which the poor girl lay, and she, with hurried alarm, exclaimed—

"Godfrey, bring in another candle; the darkness is unsafe."

Gerard Douw, forgetting for the moment her repeated injunctions, in the immediate impulse, stepped from the bedchamber into the other, in order to supply what she desired.

"Oh God! do not go, dear uncle," shrieked the unhappy girl—and at the same time she sprung from the bed, and darted after him, in order, by her grasp, to detain him. But the warning came too late, for scarcely had he passed the threshold, and hardly had his niece had time to utter the startling exclamation, when the door which divided the two rooms closed violently after him, as if swung to by a strong blast of wind. Schalken and he both rushed to the door, but their united and desperate efforts could not avail so much as to shake it. Shriek after shriek burst from the inner chamber, with all the piercing loudness of despairing terror. Schalken and Douw applied every energy and strained every nerve to force open the door; but all in vain. There was no sound of struggling from within, but the screams seemed to increase in loudness, and at the same time they heard the bolts of the latticed window withdrawn, and the window itself grated upon the sill as if thrown open. One *last* shriek, so long and piercing and agonised as to be scarcely human, swelled from the room, and suddenly there followed a death-like silence. A light step was heard crossing the floor, as if from the bed to the window; and almost at the same instant the door gave way, and, yielding to the pressure of the external applicants, they were nearly precipitated into the room. It was empty. The window was open, and Schalken sprung to a chair and gazed out upon the street and canal below. He saw no form, but he beheld, or thought he beheld, the waters of the broad canal beneath settling ring after ring in heavy circular ripples, as if a moment before disturbed by the immersion of some large and heavy mass.

No trace of Rose was ever after discovered, nor was any thing certain respecting her mysterious wooer detected or even suspected—no clue whereby to trace the intricacies of the labyrinth and to arrive at a distinct conclusion was to be found. But an incident occurred, which, though it will not be received by our rational readers as at all approaching to evidence upon the matter, nevertheless produced a strong and a lasting impression upon the mind of Schalken. Many years after the events which we have detailed, Schalken, then remotely situated, received an intimation of his father's death, and of his intended burial upon a fixed day in the church of Rotterdam. It was necessary that a very considerable journey should be performed by the funeral procession, which, as it will readily be believed, was not very numerously attended. Schalken with difficulty arrived in Rotterdam late in the day upon which the funeral was appointed to take place. It had not then arrived. Evening closed in, and still it did not appear.

Schalken strolled down to the church —he found it open—notice of the arrival of the funeral had been given, and the vault in which the body was to be laid had been opened. The officer, who is analogous to our sexton, on seeing a well-dressed gentleman, whose object was to attend the expected funeral, pacing the aisle of the church, hospitably invited him to share with him the comforts of a blazing wood fire, which, as was his custom in winter time upon such occasions, he had kindled in the hearth of a chamber which communicated, by a flight of steps, with the vault below. In this chamber Schalken and his entertainer seated themselves, and the sexton, after some fruitless attempts to engage his guest in conversation, was obliged to apply himself to his tobacco-pipe and can, to solace his solitude. In spite of his grief and cares, the fatigues of a rapid journey of nearly forty hours gradually overcame the mind and body of Godfrey Schalken, and he sank into a deep sleep, from which he was awakened by some one's shaking him gently by the shoulder. He first thought that the old sexton had called him, but *he* was no longer in the room. He roused himself, and as soon as he could clearly see what was around him, he perceived a female form, clothed in a kind of light robe of muslin, part of which was so disposed as to act as a veil, and in her hand she carried a lamp. She was moving rather away from him, and towards the flight of steps which conducted towards the vaults. Schalken felt a vague alarm at the sight of this figure, and at the same time an irresistible impulse to follow its guidance. He followed it towards the vaults, but when it reached the head of the stairs, he paused—the figure paused also, and, turning gently round, displayed, by the light of the lamp it carried, the face and features of his first love, Rose Velderkaust. There was nothing horrible, or even sad, in the countenance. On the contrary, it wore the same arch smile which used to enchant the artist long before in his happy days. A feeling of awe and of interest, too intense to be resisted, prompted him to follow the spectre, if spectre it were. She descended the stairs—he followed—and, turning to the left, through a narrow passage, she led him, to his infinite surprise, into what appeared to be an old-fashioned Dutch apartment, such as the pictures of Gerard Douw have served to immortalize. Abundance of costly antique furniture was disposed about the room, and in one corner stood a four-post bed, with heavy black cloth curtains around it; the figure frequently turned towards him with the same arch smile; and when she came to the side of the bed, she drew the curtains, and, by the light of the lamp, which she held towards its contents, she disclosed to the horror-stricken painter, sitting bolt upright in the bed, the livid and demoniac form of Vanderhausen. Schalken had hardly seen him, when he fell senseless upon the floor, where he lay until discovered, on the next morning, by persons employed in closing the passages into the vaults. He was lying in a cell of considerable size, which had not been disturbed for a long time, and he had fallen beside a large coffin, which was supported upon small stone pillars, a security against the attacks of vermin.

To his dying day Schalken was satisfied of the reality of the vision which he had witnessed, and he has left behind him a curious evidence of the impression which it wrought upon his fancy, in a painting executed shortly after the event we have narrated, and which is valuable as exhibiting not only the peculiarities which have made Schalken's pictures sought after, but even more so as presenting a portrait as close and faithful as one taken from memory can be, of his early love, Rose Velderkaust, whose mysterious fate must ever remain matter of speculation. The picture represents a chamber of antique masonry, such as might be found in most old cathedrals, and is lighted faintly by a lamp carried in the hand of a female figure, such as we have above attempted to describe; and in the back-ground, and to the left of him who examines the painting, there stands the form of a man apparently aroused from sleep, and by his attitude, his hand being laid upon his sword, exhibiting considerable alarm : this last figure is illuminated only by the expiring glare of a wood or charcoal fire. The whole production exhibits a beautiful specimen of that artful snd singular distribution of light and shade which has rendered the name of Schalken immortal among the artists of his country. This tale is traditionary, and the reader will easily perceive, by our studiously omitting to heighten many points of the narrative, when a little additional colouring might have added effect to the recital, that we have desired to lay before him, not a figment of the brain, but a curious tradition connected with, and belonging to, the biography of a famous artist.

SCRAPS OF HIBERNIAN BALLADS.

BEING AN EIGHTH EXTRACT FROM THE LEGACY OF THE LATE FRANCIS PURCELL, P.P. OF DRUMCOOLAGH.

I HAVE observed, my dear friend, among other grievous misconceptions current among men otherwise well-informed, and which tend to degrade the pretensions of my native land, an impression that there exists no such thing as indigenous modern Irish composition, deserving the name of poetry—a belief which has been thoughtlessly sustained and confirmed by the unconscionable literary perverseness of Irishmen themselves, who have preferred the easy task of concocting humorous extravaganzas, which caricature with merciless exaggeration the pedantry, bombast, and blunders, incident to the lowest order of Hibernian ballads, to the more pleasurable and patriotic duty of collecting together the many, many specimens of genuine poetic feeling, which have grown up, like its wild flowers, from the warm though neglected soil of Ireland. In fact, the productions which have long been regarded as pure samples of Irish poetic composition, such as "The Groves of Blarney," and "The Wedding of Ballyporeen," "Ally Croker," &c. &c. are altogether spurious, and as much the thing they call themselves "as I to Hercules." There are to be sure in Ireland, as in all countries, poems which deserve to be laughed at. The native productions of which I speak, frequently abound in absurdities; absurdities which are often too, provokingly mixed up with what is beautiful, but I strongly and absolutely deny that the prevailing, or even the usual character of Irish poetry is that of comicality. No country, no time, is devoid of real poetry, or something approaching to it; and surely, it were a strange thing if Ireland, abounding as she does, from shore to shore, with all that is beautiful, and grand, and savage in scenery, and filled with wild recollections, vivid passions, warm affections, and keen sorrow, could find no language to speak withal, but that of mummery and jest. No, her language is imperfect, but there is strength in its rudeness, and beauty in its wildness; and above all, strong feeling flows through it, like fresh fountains in rugged caverns. And yet I will not say that the language of genuine indigenous Irish composition is always vulgar and uncouth: on the contrary, I am in possession of some specimens, though by no means of the highest order as to poetic merit, which do not possess throughout a single peculiarity of diction. The lines which I will lay before you, "*exempli gratia,*" by way of illustration, are from the pen of an unfortunate young man, of very humble birth, whose early hopes were crossed by the untimely death of her whom he loved. He was a self-educated man, and in after life rose to high distinctions in the church to which he devoted himself—an act which proves the sincerity of spirit with which these verses were written.

When moonlight falls on wave and wimple,
And silvers every circling dimple,
  That onward, onward sails.
When fragrant hawthorns wild and simple
  Lend perfume to the gales,
And the pale moon in heaven abiding,
O'er midnight mists and mountains riding,
Shines on the river smoothly gliding
  Through quiet dales,

I wander there in solitude,
Charmed by the chiming music rude
  Of streams that fret and flow.
For by that eddying stream *she* stood,
  On such a night I trow:
For *her* the thorn its breath was lending,
On this same tide *her* eye was bending,
And with its voice *her* voice was blending
  Long, long ago.

Wild stream! I walk by thee once more,
I see thy hawthorns dim and hoar,
  I hear thy waters moan,
And night-winds sigh from shore to shore,
  With hushed and hollow tone;
But breezes on their light way winging,
And all thy waters heedless singing,
No more to me are gladness bringing—
  I am alone.

Years after years, their swift way keeping,
Like sere leaves down thy current sweeping,
  Are lost for aye, and sped—
And Death the wintry soil is heaping
  As fast as flowers are shed.
And she who wandered by my side,
And breathed enchantment o'er thy tide,
That makes thee still my friend and guide—
  And she is dead.

These lines I have transcribed in order to prove a point which I have heard you deny, namely, that an Irish peasant, for their author was no more, may write at least correctly in the matter of measure, language, and rhyme, and I shall add several extracts in further illustration of the same fact, a fact whose assertion, it must be allowed, may appear somewhat paradoxical even to those who are acquainted, though superficially, with Hibernian composition. The rhymes are, it must be granted, in the generality of such productions, very latitudinarian indeed, and as a veteran votary of the muse once assured me, depend wholly upon the "*wowls,*" (vowels,) as may be seen in the following stanza of the famous "Shanavan Voicth."

" What'll we have for supper?
    Says my Shanavan Voicth,
We'll have turkeys and roast *beef,*
And we'll eat it very *sweet,*
And then we'll take a *sleep,*
    Says my Shanavan Voicth."

But I am desirous of showing you that although barbarisms may and do exist in our native ballads, there are still to be found exceptions which furnish examples of strict correctness in rhyme and metre. Whether they be one whit the better for this I have my doubts. In order to establish my position, I subjoin a portion of a ballad by one Michael Finley, of whom more anon. The "*gentleman*" spoken of in the song is Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

The day that traitors sould him and inimies bought him,
  The day that the red gold and red blood was paid—
Then the green turned pale and thrembled like the dead leaves in Autumn,
  And the heart an' hope iv Ireland in the could grave was laid.

The day I saw you first, with the sunshine fallin' round ye,
  My heart fairly opened with the grandeur of the view :
For ten thousand Irish boys that day did surround ye,
  An' I swore to stand by them till death, an' fight for you.

Ye wor the bravest gentleman, an' the best that ever stood,
  And your eyelid never thrembled for danger nor for dread,
An' nobleness was flowin' in each stream of your blood—
  My blessing on you night an' day, and Glory be your bed.

My black an' bitter curse on the head, an' heart, an' hand,
  That plotted, wished, an' worked the fall of this Irish hero bold,
God's curse upon the Irishman that sould his native land,
  An' hell consume to dust the hand that held the thraitor's gold.

Such were the politics and poetry of Michael Finley, in his day, perhaps, the most noted song-maker of his country ; but as genius is never without its eccentricities, Finley had his peculiarities, and among these, perhaps, the most amusing was his rooted aversion to pen, ink, and paper, in perfect independence of which, all his compositions were completed. It is impossible to describe the jealousy with which he regarded the presence of writing materials of any kind, and his ever wakeful fears lest some literary pirate should transfer his *oral* poetry to paper—fears which were not altogether without warrant, inasmuch as the recitation and singing of these original pieces, were to him a source of wealth and importance. I recollect upon one occasion, his detecting me in the very act of following his recitation with my pencil, and I shall not soon forget his indignant scowl, as stopping abruptly in the midst of a line, he sharply exclaimed, " Is my *pome* a pig-sty, or what, that you want a surveyor's ground-plan of it ?" Owing to this absurd scruple, I have been obliged, with one exception, that of the ballad of " Phaudhrig Crohoore," to rest satisfied with such snatches and fragments of his poetry as my memory could bear away—a fact which must account for the mutilated state in which I have been obliged to present the foregoing specimen of his composition. It was in vain for me to reason with this man of metres upon the unreasonableness of this despotic and exclusive assertion of copyright. I well remember his answer to me when, among other arguments, I urged the advisability of some care for the permanence of his reputation, as a motive to induce him to consent to have his poems written down, and thus reduced to a palpable and enduring form. " I often noticed," said he, " when a mist id be spreadin', a little brier to look as big, you'd think, as an oak tree ; an' the same way in the dimness iv the night-fall, I often seen a man tremblin' and crassin' himself as if a sperit was before him, at the sight iv a small thorn bush, that he'd leap over with ase, if the day-light an' sunshine was in it. An' that's the rason why I think it id be better for the likes iv me to be remimbered in tradition than to be written in history." Finley has now been dead nearly eleven years, and his fame has not prospered by the tactics which he pursued, for his reputation, so far from being magnified, has been wholly obliterated by the mists of obscurity. With no small difficulty, and no inconsiderable manœuvering, I succeeded in procuring, at an expense of trouble and conscience, which you will, no doubt, think but poorly rewarded, an accurate "report" of one of his most popular recitations. It celebrates one of the many daring exploits of the once famous Phaudhrig Crohoore, (in prosaic English, Patrick Connor.) I have witnessed powerful effects produced upon large assemblies by Finley's recitation of this poem, which he was wont, upon pressing invitation, to deliver at weddings, wakes, and the like; of course the power of the narrative was greatly enhanced by the fact, that many of his auditors had seen and well knew the chief actors in the drama.

PHAUDHRIG CROHOORE.

Oh Phaudhrig Crohore was the broth of a boy,
And he stood six foot eight,
And his arm was as round as another man's thigh,
'Tis Phaudhrig was great,—
And his hair was as black as the shadows of night,
And hung over the scars left by many a fight;
And his voice like the thunder was deep, strong, and loud,
And his eye like the lightnin', from under the cloud.
And all the girls liked him, for he could spake civil,
And sweet when he chose it, for he was the divil.
An' there wasn't a girl from thirty-five undher,
Divil a matter how crass but he could come round her.
But of all the sweet girls that smiled on him, but one
Was the girl of his heart, an' he loved her alone.
An' warm as the sun, as the rock firm an' sure
Was the love of the heart of Phaudhrig Crohoore,
An' he'd die for one smile from his Kathleen O'Brien,
For his love, like his hatred, was sthrong as the lion.

But Michael O'Hanlon loved Kathleen as well
As he hated Crohoore, an' that same was like hell.
But O'Brien liked *him*, for they were the same parties,
The O'Briens, O'Hanlons, an' Murphys, and Cartys—
An' they all went together an' hated Crohoore,
For it's many's the batin' he gave them before—
An' O'Hanlon made up to O'Brien, an' says he,
I'll marry your daughter, if you'll give her to me,—
And the match was made up, an when Shrovetide came on,
The company assimbled three hundred if one,—
There was all the O'Hanlons, an' Murphys, an' Cartys,
An' the young boys an' girls av all o' them parties.
An' the O'Briens av coorse, gothered strong on that day
An' the pipers an' fiddlers were tearin' away,
There was roarin', an' jumpin', an' jiggin', an' flingin',
An' jokin', an' blessin', an' kissin', an' singin,'
An' they wor all laughin', why not to be sure,
How O'Hanlon came inside of Phaudhrig Crohoore,
An' they all talked an' laughed the length of the table
Atin' an' dhrinkin' all while they wor able,
And with pipin' an' fiddlin' an' roarin' like tundher,
Your head you'd think fairly was splittin' asundher;
And the priest called out "silence ye blackguards agin,"
An' he took up his prayer-book, just goin' to begin,
An' they all held their tongues from their funnin' and bawlin'
So silent you'd notice the smallest pin fallin';
An' the priest was just beginin' to read, whin the door
Sprung back to the wall, and in walked Crohoore,
Oh! Phaudhrig Crohoore was the broth of a boy,
An' he stood six foot eight,
An' his arm was as round as another man's thigh,
'Tis Phaudhrig was great,—
An' he walked slowly up, watched by many a bright eye,
As a black cloud moves on through the stars of the sky,

An' none sthrove to stop him, for Phaudhrig was great,
Till he stood all alone, just apposit the sate,
Where O'Hanlon and Kathleen, his beautiful bride,
Were sitting so illigant out side by side,—
An' he gave her one look that her heart almost broke,
An' he turned to O'Brien, her father, and spoke,
An' his voice, like the thunder, was deep, sthrong an' loud
An' his eye shone like lightnin' from under the cloud,
"I didn't come here like a tame, crawlin' mouse,
But I stand like a man in my inimy's house,
In the field, on the road, Phaudhrig never knew fear,
Of his foemen, an' God knows he scorns it here;
So lave me at aise, for three minutes or four,
To spake to the girl I'll never see more."
An' to Kathleen he turned, and his voice changed its tone,
For he thought of the days when he called her his own,
An' his eye blazed like lightnin' from undher the cloud
On his false-hearted girl, reproachful and proud,
An', says he, "Kathleen bawn is it thrue what I hear
That you marry of your free choice without threat or fear,
If so spake the word, an I'll turn and depart,
Chated once, and once only by woman's false heart."
Oh! sorrow and love made the poor girl dumb,
An' she thried hard to spake, but the words wouldn't come,
For the sound of his voice, as he stood there fornint her,
Wint could on her heart as the night wind in winther.
An' the tears in her blue eyes stood tremblin' to flow,
And pale was her cheek, as the moonshine on snow;
Then the heart of bould Phaudrig swelled high in its place,
For he knew, by one look in that beautiful face,
That though sthrangers an' foemen their pledged hands might sever,
Her true heart was his, and his only, for ever.
An' he lifted his voice, like the agle's hoarse call,
An' says Phaudhrig, "She's mine still, in spite of ye all."
Then up jumped O'Hanlon, an' a tall boy was he,
An' he looked on bould Phaudhrig as fierce as could be,
An' says he, "by the hokey, before you go out,
Bould Phaudhrig Crohoore, you must fight for a bout."
Then Phaudhrig made answer, "I'll do my endeavour,"
An' with one blow, he stretched bould O'Hanlon for ever.
In his arms he took Kathleen, an' stepped to the door;
And he leaped on his horse, and flung her before;
An' they all were so bother'd, that not a man stirred
Till the galloping hoofs on the pavement were heard.
Then up they all started, like bees in the swarm,
An' they riz a great shout, like the burst of a storm,
An' they roared, and they ran, and they shouted galore;
But Kathleen and Phaudhrig they never saw more.

But them days are gone by, an' he is no more;
An' the green grass is growin' o'er Phaudhrig Crohoore,
For he couldn't be asy or quiet at all;
As he lived a brave boy, he resolved so to fall.
And he took a good pike—for Phaudhrig was great—
And he fought, an' he died in the year ninety-eight.
An' the day that Crohoore in the green field was killed,
A sthrong boy was sthretched, and a sthrong heart was stilled.

It is due to the memory of Finley to say, that the foregoing ballad, though bearing throughout a strong resemblance to Walter Scott's Lochinvar, was nevertheless composed long before that spirited production had seen the light.

JIM SULIVAN'S ADVENTURES IN THE GREAT SNOW.

BEING A NINTH EXTRACT FROM THE LEGACY OF THE LATE FRANCIS PURCELL, P.P. OF DRUMCOOLAGH.

JIM SULIVAN was a dacent, honest boy as you'd find in the seven parishes, an' he was a beautiful singer, an' an illegant dancer intirely, an' a mighty pleasant boy in himself; but he had the divil's bad luck, for he married for love, an' av course he never had an asy minute afther. Nell Gorman was the girl he fancied, an' a beautiful slip of a girl she was, jist twinty to the minute when he married her. She was as round an' as complate in all her shapes as a firkin, you'd think, an' her two cheeks was as fat an' as red, it id open your heart to look at them. But beauty is not the thing all through, an' as beautiful as she was she had the divil's tongue, an' the divil's timper, an' the divil's behavour all out; an' it was impassible for him to be in the house with her for while you'd count tin without havin' an argument, an' as sure as she riz an argument with him she'd hit him a wipe iv a skillet or whatever lay next to her hand. Well, this wasn't at all plasin' to Jim Sulivan you may be sure, an' there was scarce a week that his head wasn't plasthered up, or his back bint double, or his nose swelled as big as a pittaty, with the vilence iv her timper, an' his heart was scalded everlastinly with her tongue; so he had no pace or quietness in body or soul at all at all, with the way she was goin' an. Well, your honour, one cowld snowin' evenin' he kim in afther his day's work regulatin' the men in the farm, an' he sat down very quite by the fire, for he had a scrimmidge with her in the mornin', an' all he wanted was an air iv the fire in pace; so divil a word he said but dhrew a stool an' sat down close to the fire. Well, as soon as the woman saw him, "Move aff," says she, "an' don't be inthrudin' an the fire," says she. Well, he kept never mindin', an' didn't let an' to hear a word she was sayin', so she kim over an' she had a spoon in her hand, an' she took jist the smallest taste in life iv the boilin' wather out iv the pot, an' she dhropped it down an his shins, an' with that he let a roar you'd think the roof id fly aff iv the house. "Hould your tongue, you barbarrian," says she, "you'll waken the child," says she. "An' if I done right," says he, for the spoonful of boilin' wather riz him entirely, "I'd take yourself," says he, "an' I'd stuff you into the pot an the fire, an' boil you," says he, "into castor oil," says he. "That's purty behavour," says shē; "it's fine usage you're givin' me, isn't it?" says she, gettin' wickeder every minute; "but before I'm boiled," says she, "thry how you like *that,*" says she; an', sure enough, before he had time to put up his guard, she hot him a rale terrible clink iv the iron spoon acrass the jaw. "Hould me, some iv ye, or I'll murdher her," says he. "Will you?" says she, an' with that she hot him another tin times as good as the first. "By jabers," says he, slappin' himself behind, "that's the last salute you'll ever give me," says he, "so take my last blessin'," says he, "you ungovernable baste," says he—an' with that he pulled an his hat an' walked out iv the door. Well, she never minded a word he said, for he used to say the same thing all as one every time she dhrew blood; an' she had no expectation at all but he'd come back by the time supper id be ready; but faix the story didn't go quite so simple this time, for while he was walkin', lonesome enough, down the borheen, with his heart almost broke with the pain, for his shins an' his jaw was mighty troublesome, av course, with the thratement he got, who did he see but Mick Hanlon, his uncle's sarvint *by,* ridin' down, quite an' asy, an the ould black horse, with a halter as long as himself. "Is that Mr. Soolivan?" says the *by,* says he, as soon as he saw him a good bit aff. "To be sure it is, ye spalpeen, you," says Jim, roarin' out; "what do you want wid me this time a-day?" says he. "Don't you know me?" says the gossoon, "it's Mick Hanlon that's in it," says he. "Oh, blur an agers, thin, it's welcome you are, Micky asthore," says Jim; "how is all wid the man an' the woman beyant?" says he. "Oh!" says Micky, "bad enough," says he, "the ould man's jist aff, an' if you don't hurry like shot," says he, "he'll be in glory before you get there," says he. "It's jokin' ye are," says Jim, sorrowful enough, for he was mighty partial to his uncle intirely. "Oh, not in the smallest taste," says Micky, "the breath was jist out iv him," says he, "when I left the farm, 'an',' says he, 'take the ould black horse,' says he, 'for he's shure-footed for the road,' says he, 'an' bring Jim Soolivan here,' says he, 'for I think I'd die asy af I could see him onst,' says he." "Well," says Jim, "will I have time," says he, "to go back to the house, for it would be a consolation," says he, "to tell the bad news to the woman?" says he. "It's too late you are already," says Micky, "so come up behind me, for God's sake," says he, "an' don't waste time;" an' with that he brought the horse up beside the ditch, an' Jim Soolivan mounted up behind Micky, an' they rode off, an' tin good miles it was iv a road, an' at the other side iv Keeper entirely; an' it was snowin' so fast that the ould baste could hardly go an at all at all, an' the two bys an his back was jist like a snowball all as one, an' almost fruz an' smothered at the same time, your honour; an' they wor both mighty sorrowful entirely, an' their toes almost dhroppin' aff wid the could. And when Jim got to the farm his uncle was gettin' an illegantly, an' he was sittin' up sthrong an' warm in the bed, and improvin' every minute, an' no signs av dyin' an him at all at all; so he had all his throuble for nothin'. But this wasn't all, for the snow kem so thick that it was umpassible to get along the roads at all at all; an' faix, instead iv gettin' betther, next mornin' it was only tin times worse; so Jim had jist to take it asy, an' stay wid his uncle antil such times as the snow id melt. Well, your honour, the evenin' Jim Soolivan wint away, whin the dark was closin' in, Nell Gorman, his wife, begind to get mighty anasy in herself whin she didn't see him comin' back at all; an' she was gettin' more an' more frightful in herself every minute till the dark kem an, an' divil a taste iv her husband was comin' at all at all. "Oh!" says she, "there's no use in purtendin', I know he's kilt himself; he has committed infantycide an himself," says she, "like a dissipated bliggard as he always was," says she, "God rest his soul. Oh, thin, isn't it me an' not you, Jim Soolivan, that's the unforthunate woman," says she, "for ain't I cryin' here, an' isn't he in heaven, the bliggard," says she. "Oh, voh, voh, it's not at home comfortable with your wife an' family that you are, Jim Soolivan," says she, "but in the other world, you aumathaun, in glory wid the saints, I hope," says she. "It's I that's the unforthinate famale," says she, "an' not yourself, Jim Soolivan," says she. An' this way she kep an till mornin', cryin' an' lamintin'; an' wid the first light she called up all the sarvint bys, an' she tould them to go out an' to sarch every inch iv ground to find the corpse, "for I'm sure," says she, "it's not to go hide himself he would," says she. Well, they went as well as they could rummagin' through the snow, antil, a last, what should they come to, sure enough, but the corpse of a poor thravelling man, that fell over the quarry the night before by rason of the snow an' some licqure he had, maybe; but, at any rate, he was as dead as a herrin', an' his face was knocked all to pieces jist like an over-boiled pitaty, glory be to God; an' divil a taste iv a nose or a chin, or a hill or a hollow from one end av his face to the other but was all as flat as a pancake; an' he was about Jim Soolivan's size, an' dhressed out exactly the same, wid a ridin' coat an' new cordheroys; so they carried him home, an' they were all as sure as daylight it was Jim Soolivan himself, an' they were wondherin' he'd do sich a dirty turn as to go kill himself for spite. Well, your honour, they waked him as well as they could, with what neighbours they could get together, but by rason iv the snow, there wasn't enough gothered to make much divarsion; however it was a plisint wake enough, an' the churchyard an' the priest bein' convanient, as soon as the youngsthers had their bit iv fun and divarsion out iv the corpse, they burried it without a great dale iv throuble; an' about three days afther the berrin, ould Jim Mallowney, from th'other side iv the little hill, her own cousin by the mother's side—he had a snug bit iv a farm an' a house close by, by the same token—kem walkin' in to see how she was in her health, an' he dhrew a chair, an' he sot down an' beginned to convarse her about one thing an' another, until he got her quite an' asy into middlin' good humour, an' as soon as he seen it was time, "I'm wondherin'," says he, "Nell Gorman, sich a handsome, likely girl, id be thinkin' iv nothin' but lamintin' an' the likes," says he, "an' lingerin' away her days without any consolation, or gettin' a husband," says he. "Oh," says she, "isn't it only three days since I burried the poor man," says she, "an' isn't it rather soon to be talkin' iv marryin' agin?" "Divil a taste," says he, "three days is jist the time to a minute for cryin' afther a husband, an' there's no occasion in life to be keepin' it up," says he; "an' besides all that," says he, "Shrovetide is almost over, an' if you don't be sturrin' yourself an' lookin' about you, you'll be late," says he, "for this year at any rate, an' that's twelve months lost, an' who's to look afther the farm all that time?" says he, "an' to keep the men to their work?" says he. "It's thrue for you, Jim Mallowney," says she, "but I'm afeard the neighbours will be all talkin' about it," says she. "Divil's cure to the word," says he. "An' who would you advise?" says she. "Young Andy Curtis is the boy," says he. "He's a likely boy in himself," says she; "an' as handy a gossoon as is out," says he. "Well, thin, Jim Mallowney," says she, "here's my hand, an' you may be talkin' to Andy Curtis, an' if he's willin' I'm agreable—is that enough?" says she. So with that he made off with himself strait to Andy Curtis, an' before three days more was past the weddin' kem an, an' Nell Gorman an' Andy Curtis was married as complate as possible; an' if the wake was plisint the weddin' was tin times as agreable, an' all the neighbours that could make their way to it was there, an' there was three fiddlers an' lots iv pipers, an' ould* Connor Shamus the piper himself was in it—by the same token it was the last weddin' he ever played music at, for the next mornin', whin he was goin' home, bein' mighty hearty an' plisint in himself, he was smothered in the snow, undher the ould castle; an' by my sowl he was a sore loss to the boys and girls twenty miles round, for he was the illigantest piper, barrin' the liquer alone, that ever worked a bellows. Well, a week passed over smart enough, an' Nell an' her new husband was mighty well continted with one another, for it was too soon for her to begin to regulate him the way she used with poor Jim Soolivan, so they wor comfortable enough; but this was too good to last, for the thaw kem an, an' you may be sure Jim Soolivan didn't lose a minute's time as soon as the heavy dhrift iv snow was melted enough between him and home to let him pass, for he didn't hear a word iv news from home sinst he lift it, by rason that no one, good nor bad, could thravel at all, with the way the snow was dhrifted. So, one night, when Nell Gorman an' her new husband, Andy Curtis, was snug an' warm in bed, an' fast asleep, an' every thing quite, who should come to the door, sure enough, but Jim Soolivan himself, an' he beginned flakin' the door wid a big blakthorn stick he had, an' roarin' out like the divil to open the door, for he had a dhrop taken. "What the divil's the matther?" says Andy Curtis, wakenin' out iv his sleep. "Who's batin' the door?" says Nell: "what's all the noise for?" says she. "Who's in it?" says Andy. "It's me," says Jim. "Who are you?" says Andy; "what's your name?" "Jim Soolivan," says he. "By jabers you lie," says Andy. "Wait till I get at you," says Jim, hittin' the door a lick iv the wattle you'd hear half a mile off. "It's him, sure enough," says Nell; "I know his speech; it's his wandherin' sowl that can't get rest, the crass o' Christ betune us an' harm." "Let me in," says Jim, "or I'll dhrive the door in a top iv yis. "Jim Soolivan, Jim Soolivan," says Nell, sittin' up in the bed, an' gropin' for a quart bottle iv holy wather she used to hang by the back iv the bed, "don't come in, darlin', there's holy wather here," says she; "but tell me from where you are is there any thing that's throublin' your poor sinful sowl?" says she. "An' tell me, how many masses 'ill make you asy, an' by this crass, I'll buy you as many as you want," says she. "I don't know what the divil you mane," says Jim. "Go back," says she, "go back to glory, for God's sake," says she. "Divil's cure to the bit iv me 'ill go back to glory, or any where else," says he, "this blessed night; so open the door at onst, an' let me in," says he. "The Lord forbid," says she. "By jabers you'd betther," says he, "or it 'ill be worse for you," says he; an' wid that he fell to wallopin' the door till he was fairly tired, an' Andy an' his wife crassin' themselves an' sayin' their prayers for the bare life all the time. "Jim Soolivan," says she, as soon as he was done, "go back, for God's sake, an' don't be freakenin' me an' your poor fatherless childhren," says she. "Why, you bosthoon, you," says Jim, "won't you let your husband in," says he, "to his own house?" says he. "You *wor* my husband, sure enough," says she, "but it's well you know, Jim Soolivan, you're not my husband

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* Literally, Cornelius James—the last name employed as a patronymic. Connor is used, invariably, in the South, as the short name for Cornelius, or "*Crohore*."

now," says she. "You're as dhrunk as can be consaved," says Jim. "Go back, in God's name, pacibly to your grave," says Nell. "By my sowl, it's to my grave you'll sind me, sure enough," says he, "you hard-hearted bain', for I'm jist aff wid the cowld," says he. "Jim Sulivan," says she, "it's in your dacent coffin you should be, you unforthunate sperit," says she; "what is it's annoyin' your sowl, in the wide world, at all?" says she; "hadn't you every thing complate?" says she, "the oil, an' the wake, an' the berrin'?" says she. "Och, by the hoky," says Jim, "it's too long I'm makin' a fool iv mysilf, gostherin' wid you outside iv my own door," says he, "for it's plane to be seen," says he, "you don't know what you're sayin', an' no one *else* knows what you mane, you unforthunate fool," says he; "so, onst for all, open the door quietly," says he, "or, by my sowkins, I'll not lave a splinther together," says he. "Well, whin Nell an' Andy seen he was getting vexed, they beginned to bawl out their prayers, with the fright, as if the life was lavin' them; an' the more he bate the door, the louder they prayed, until at last Jim was fairly tired out. "Bad luck to you," says he; "for a rale divil av a woman," says he. "I can't get any advantage av you, any way; but wait till I get hould iv you, that's all," says he. An' he turned aff from the door, an' wint round to the cow-house, an' settled himself as well as he could, in the sthraw; an' he was tired enough wid the thravellin' he had in the day time, an' a good dale bothered with what liquor he had taken; so he was purty sure of sleepin' wherever he thrun himself. But, by my sowl, it wasn't the same way with the man an' the woman in the house—for divil a wink iv sleep, good or bad, could they get at all, wid the fright iv the spirit, as they supposed; an' with the first light they sint a little gossoon, as fast as he could wag, straight off, like a shot, to the priest, an' to desire him, for the love o' God, to come to them an the minute, an' to bring, if it was plasin' to his raverence, all the little things he had for sayin' mass, an' savin' sowls, an' banishin' sperits, an' freckenin' the divil, an' the likes iv that. An' it wasn't long till his raverence kem down, sure enough, on the ould gray mare, wid the little mass-boy behind him, an' the prayer-books an' bibles, an' all the other mystarious articles that was wantin', along wid him; an' as soon as he kem in, "God save all here," says he. "God save ye, kindly, your raverence," says they. "An' what's gone wrong wid ye?" says he; "ye must be very bad," says he, "entirely, to disturb my devotions," says he, "this way, jist at breakfast time," says he. "By my sowkins," says Nell, "it's bad enough we are, your raverence," says she, "for it's poor Jim's sperit," says she; "God rest his sowl, wherever it is," says she, "that was wandherin' up an' down, opposit the door all night," says she, "in the way it was no use at all, thryin' to get a wink iv sleep," says she. "It's to lay it, you want me, I suppose," says the priest. "If your raverence, 'id do that same, it 'id be plasin' to us," says Andy. "It'ill be rather expinsive," says the priest. "We'll not differ about the price, your raverence," says Andy. "Did the sperit stop long?" says the priest. "Most part iv the night," says Nell, "the Lord be merciful to us all!" says she. "That'll make it more costly than I thought," says he. "An' did it make much noise?" says he. "By my sowl, it's it that did," says Andy; "leatherin' the door wid sticks and stones," says he, antil I fairly thought every minute," says he, "the ould boords id smash, an' the sperit id be in an top iv us—God bless us," says he.—"Phiew!" says the priest; "it'll cost a power iv money." "Well, your raverence," says Andy, "take whatever you like," says he; "only make sure it won't annoy us any more," says he. "Oh! by my sowkins," says the priest, "it'll be the quarest ghost in the siven parishes," says he," if it has the courage to come back," says he, "afther what I'll do this mornin', plase God," says he; "so we'll say twelve pounds; an' God knows it's chape enough," says he, "considherin' all the sarcumstances," says he. Well, there wasn't a second word to the bargain; so they paid him the money down, an' he settled the table out like an althar, before the door, an' he settled it out wid all the things he had wid him; an' he lit a bit iv a holy candle, an' he scathered his holy wather right an' left; an' he took up a big book, an' he wint an readin' for half an hour, good; an' whin he kem to the end, he tuck hould iv his little bell, and he beginned to ring it for the bare life; an', by my sowl, he rung it so well, that he wakened Jim Sulivan in the cow-house, where he was sleepin', an' up he jumped, widout a minute's delay, an' med right for the house, where all the family an' the priest, an' the little mass-boy was assimbled, layin' the ghost; an' as soon as his raverence seen him comin' in at the door, wid the fair fright, he flung the bell at his head, an' hot him sich a lick iv it in the forehead, that he sthretched him an the flour; but faix he didn't wait to ax any questions, but he cut round the table as if the divil was afther him, an' out at the door, an' didn't stop even as much as to mount an his mare, but leathered away down the borheen as fast as his legs could carry him, though the mud was up to his knees, savin' your presence. Well, by the time Jim kem to himself, the family persaved the mistake, an' Andy wint home, lavin' Nell to make the explanation. An' as soon as Jim heerd it all, he said he was quite contint to lave her to Andy, entirely; but the priest would not hear iv it; an' he jist med him marry his wife over again, an' a merry widdin' it was, an' a fine collection for his raverence. An' Andy was there along wid the rest, an' the priest put a small pinnance upon him, for bein' in too great a hurry to marry a widdy. An' bad luck to the word he'd allow any one to say an the business, ever after, at all, at all, so, av course, no one offinded his reverence, by spakin' iv the twelve pounds he got for layin' the sperit. An' the neighbours wor all mighty well plased, to be sure, for gettin' all the divarsion of a wake, an' two weddin's for nothin'.

A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF A TYRONE FAMILY,

BEING A TENTH EXTRACT FROM THE LEGACY OF THE LATE FRANCIS PURCELL, P.P. OF DRUMCOOLAGH.

INTRODUCTION.

[In the following narrative, I have endeavoured to give as nearly as possible the "*ipsissima verba*" of the valued friend from whom I received it, conscious that any aberration from *her* mode of telling the tale of her own life, would at once impair its accuracy and its effect. Would, that, with her words, I could also bring before you her animated gesture, her expressive countenance, the solemn and thrilling air and accent with which she related the dark passages in her strange story; and, above all, that I could communicate the impressive consciousness that the narrator had seen with her own eyes, and personally acted in the scenes which she described; these accompaniments, taken with the additional circumstance, that she who told the tale was one far too deeply and sadly impressed with religious principle, to misrepresent or fabricate what she repeated as fact, gave to the tale a depth of interest which the events recorded could hardly, themselves, have produced. I became acquainted with the lady from whose lips I heard this narrative, nearly twenty years since, and the story struck my fancy so much, that I committed it to paper while it was still fresh in my mind, and should its perusal afford you entertainment for a listless half hour, my labour shall not have been bestowed in vain. I find that I have taken the story down as she told it, in the first person, and, perhaps, this is as it should be. She began as follows.]

My maiden name was Richardson,* the designation of a family of some distinction in the county of Tyrone. I was the younger of two daughters, and we were the only children. There was a difference in our ages of nearly six years, so that I did not, in my childhood, enjoy that close companionship which sisterhood, in other circumstances, necessarily involves; and while I was still a child, my sister was married. The person upon whom she bestowed her hand, was a Mr. Carew, a gentleman of property and consideration in the north of England. I remember well the eventful day of the wedding; the thronging carriages, the noisy menials, the loud laughter, the merry faces, and the gay dresses. Such sights were then new to me, and harmonized ill with the sorrowful feelings with which I regarded the event which was to separate me, as it turned out, for ever, from a sister whose tenderness alone had hitherto more than supplied all that I wanted in my mother's affection. The day soon arrived which was to remove the happy couple from Ashtown-house. The carriage stood at the hall-door, and my poor sister kissed me again, and again, telling me that I should see her soon. The carriage drove away, and I gazed after it until my eyes filled with tears, and, returning slowly to my chamber, I wept more bitterly, and so, to speak more desolately, than ever I had done before. My father had never seemed to love, or to take an interest in me. He had desired a son, and I think he never thoroughly forgave me my unfortunate sex. My having come into the world at all as his child, he regarded as a kind of fraudulent intrusion, and, as his antipathy to me had its origin in an imperfection of mine, too radical for removal, I never even hoped to stand high in his good graces. My mother was, I dare say, as fond of me as she was of any one; but she was a woman of a masculine and a worldly cast of mind. She had no tenderness or sympathy for the weaknesses, or even for the affections of woman's nature, and her demeanour towards me was peremptory, and often even harsh. It is not to be supposed, then, that I found in the society of my parents much to supply the loss of my sister. About a year after her marriage, we received letters from Mr. Carew, containing accounts of my sister's health, which, though not actually alarming, were calculated to make us seriously uneasy. The symptoms most dwelt upon, were, loss of appetite and cough. The letters concluded by intimating that he would avail himself of my father and mother's repeated invitation to spend some time at Ashtown, particularly as the physician who had been consulted as to my sister's health had strongly advised a removal to her native air. There were added repeated assurances that nothing serious was apprehended, as it was supposed that a deranged state of the liver was the only source of the symptoms which seemed to intimate consumption. In accordance with this announcement, my sister and Mr. Carew arrived in Dublin, where one of my father's carriages awaited them, in readiness to start upon whatever day or hour they might choose for their departure. It was arranged that Mr. Carew was, as soon as the day upon which they were to leave Dublin was definitely fixed, to write to my father, who intended that the two last stages should be performed by his own horses, upon whose speed and safety far more reliance might be placed than upon those of the ordinary *post-horses*, which were, at that time, almost without exception, of the very worst order. The journey, one of about ninety miles, was to be divided; the larger portion to be reserved for the second day. On Sunday, a letter reached us, stating that the party would leave Dublin on Monday, and, in due course, reach Ashtown upon Tuesday evening. Tuesday came: the evening closed in, and yet no carriage appeared; darkness came on, and still no sign of our expected visitors. Hour after hour passed away, and it was now past twelve; the night was remarkably calm, scarce a breath stirring, so that any sound, such as that produced by the rapid movement of a vehicle, would have been audible at a considerable distance. For some such sound I was feverishly listening. It was, however, my father's rule to close the house at nightfall, and the window-shutters being fastened, I was unable to reconnoitre the avenue as I would have wished. It was nearly one o'clock, and we began almost to despair of seeing them upon that night, when I thought I distinguished the sound of wheels, but so remote and faint as to make me at first very uncertain. The noise approached; it become louder and clearer; it stopped for a moment. I now heard the shrill screaking of the rusty iron, as the avenue gate revolved on its hinges; again came the sound of wheels in rapid motion.

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* I have carefully altered the names as they appear in the original MSS., for the reader will see that some of the circumstances recorded are not of a kind to reflect honour upon those involved in them; and, as many are still living, in every way honoured and honourable, who stand in close relation to the principal actors in this drama, the reader will see the necessity of the course which we have adopted.

"It is they," said I, starting up, "the carriage is in the avenue." We all stood for a few moments, breathlessly listening. On thundered the vehicle with the speed of a whirlwind; crack went the whip, and clatter went the wheels, as it rattled over the uneven pavement of the court; a general and furious barking from all the dogs about the house, hailed its arrival. We hurried to the hall in time to hear the steps let down with the sharp clanging noise peculiar to the operation, and the hum of voices exerted in the bustle of arrival. The hall-door was now thrown open, and we all stepped forth to greet our visitors. The court was perfectly empty; the moon was shining broadly and brightly upon all around; nothing was to be seen but the tall trees with their long spectral shadows, now wet with the dews of midnight. We stood gazing from right to left, as if suddenly awakened from a dream; the dogs walked suspiciously, growling and snuffing about the court, and by totally and suddenly ceasing their former loud barking, as also by carrying their tails between their legs, expressing the predominance of fear. We looked one upon the other in perplexity and dismay, and I think I never beheld more pale faces assembled. By my father's direction, we looked about to find anything which might indicate or account for the noise which we had heard; but no such thing was to be seen—even the mire which lay upon the avenue was undisturbed. We returned to the house, more panic struck than I can describe. On the next day, we learned by a messenger, who had ridden hard the greater part of the night, that my sister was dead. On Sunday evening, she had retired to bed rather unwell, and, on Monday, her indisposition declared itself unequivocally to be malignant fever. She became hourly worse, and, on Tuesday night, a little after midnight, she expired.[*] I mention this circumstance, because it was one upon which a thousand wild and fantastical reports were founded, though one would have thought that the truth scarcely required to be improved upon; and again, because it produced a strong and lasting effect upon my spirits, and indeed, I am inclined to think, upon my character. I was, for several years after this occurrence, long after the violence of my grief subsided, so wretchedly low-spirited and nervous, that I could scarcely be said to live, and during this time, habits of indecision, arising out of a listless acquiescence in the will of others, a fear of encountering even the slightest opposition, and a disposition to shrink from what are commonly called amusements, grew upon me so strongly, that I have scarcely even yet, altogether overcome them. We saw nothing more of Mr. Carew. He returned to England as soon as the melancholy rites attendant upon the event which I have just mentioned were performed; and not being altogether inconsolable, he married again within two years; after which, owing to the remoteness of our relative situations, and other circumstances, we gradually lost sight of him. I was now an only child; and, as my elder sister had died without issue, it was evident that, in the ordinary course of things, my father's property, which was altogether in his power, would go to me, and the consequence was, that before I was fourteen, Ashtown-house was besieged by a host of suitors; however, whether it was that *I* was too young, or that none of the aspirants to my hand stood sufficiently high in rank or wealth, I was suffered by both parents to do exactly as I pleased; and well was it for me, as I afterwards found that fortune, or, rather Providence, had so ordained it, that I had not suffered my affections to become in any degree engaged, for my mother would never have suffered any *silly fancy* of mine, as she was in the habit of styling an attachment, to stand in the way of her ambitious views; views which she was determined to carry into effect, in defiance of every obstacle, and in order to accomplish which, she would not have hesitated to sacrifice anything so unreasonable and contemptible as a girlish passion.

When I reached the age of sixteen, my mother's plans began to develope themselves, and, at her suggestion, we moved to Dublin to sojourn for the winter, in order that no time might be lost in disposing of me to the best advantage. I had been too long accustomed to consider myself as of no importance whatever, to believe for a moment that I was in reality the cause of all the bustle and preparation which surrounded me, and being thus relieved from the pain which a consciousness of my real situation would have inflicted, I journeyed towards the capital with a feeling of total indifference.

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[*] The residuary legatee of the late Frances Purcell, who has the honour of selecting such of his lamented old friend's manuscripts as may appear fit for publication, in order that the lore which they contain may reach the world before scepticism and utility have robbed our species of the precious gift of credulity, and scornfully kicked before them, or trampled into annihilation, those harmless fragments of picturesque superstition, which it is our object to preserve, has been subjected to the charge of dealing too largely in the marvellous; and it has been half insinuated that such is his love for *diablerie*, that he is content to wander a mile out of his way, in order to meet a fiend or a goblin, and thus to sacrifice all regard for truth and accuracy to the idle hope of affrighting the imagination, and thus pandering to the bad taste of his reader. He begs leave, then, to take this opportunity of asserting his perfect innocence of all the crimes laid to his charge, and to assure his reader that he never *pandered to his bad taste*, nor went one inch out of his way to introduce witch, fairy, devil, ghost, or any other of the grim fraternity of the redoubted Raw-head and bloody-bones. His province, touching these tales, has been attended with no difficulty and little responsibility; indeed, he is accountable for nothing more than an alteration in the names of persons mentioned therein, when such a step seemed necessary, and for an occasional note, whenever he conceived it possible, innocently, to edge in a word. These tales have been *written down*, as the heading of each announces, by the Rev. Francis Purcell, P. P. of Drumcoolagh; and in all the instances, which are many, in which the present writer has had an opportunity of comparing the manuscript of his departed friend with the actual traditions which are current amongst the families whose fortunes they pretend to illustrate, he has uniformly found that whatever of supernatural occurred in the story, so far from having been exagge- ted by him, had been rather softened down, and, wherever it could be attempted, unted for.

My father's wealth and connection had established him in the best society, and, consequently, upon our arrival in the metropolis, we commanded whatever enjoyment or advantages its gaities afforded. The tumult and novelty of the scenes in which I was involved did not fail considerably to amuse me, and my mind gradually recovered its tone, which was naturally cheerful. It was almost immediately known and reported that I was an heiress, and of course my attractions were pretty generally acknowledged. Among the many gentlemen whom it was my fortune to please, one, ere long, established himself in my mother's good graces, to the exclusion of all less important aspirants. However, I had not understood, or even remarked his attentions, nor, in the slightest degree, suspected his or my mother's plans respecting me, when I was made aware of them rather abruptly by my mother herself. We had attended a splendid ball, given by Lord M——, at his residence in Stephen's-green, and I was, with the assistance of my waiting-maid, employed in rapidly divesting myself of the rich ornaments which, in profuseness and value, could scarcely have found their equals in any private family in Ireland. I had thrown myself into a lounging chair beside the fire, listless and exhausted, after the fatigues of the evening, when I was aroused from the reverie into which I had fallen, by the sound of footsteps approaching my chamber, and my mother entered.

"Fanny, my dear," said she, in her softest tone. "I wish to say a word or two with you before I go to rest. You are not fatigued, love, I hope?"

"No, no, madam, I thank you," said I, rising at the same time from my seat with the formal respect so little practised now.

"Sit down, my dear," said she, placing herself upon a chair beside me; "I must chat with you for a quarter of an hour or so. Saunders, (to the maid) you may leave the room; do not close the room door, but shut that of the lobby."

This precaution against curious ears having been taken as directed, my mother proceeded.

"You have observed, I should suppose, my dearest Fanny; indeed, you *must* have observed, Lord Glenfallen's marked attentions to you?"

"I assure you, madam," I began.

"Well, well, that is all right," interrupted my mother; "of course you must be modest upon the matter; but listen to me for a few moments, my love, and I will prove to your satisfaction that your modesty is quite unnecessary in this case. You have done better than we could have hoped, at least, so very soon. Lord Glenfallen is in love with you. I give you joy o your conquest," and saying this, my mother kissed my forehead.

"In love with me!" I exclaimed, in unfeigned astonishment.

"Yes, in love with you," repeated my mother; "devotedly, distractedly in love with you. Why, my dear, what is there wonderful in it; look in the glass, and look at these," she continued, pointing with a smile to the jewels which I had just removed from my person, and which now lay a glittering heap upon the table.

"May there not," said I, hesitating between confusion and real alarm; "is it not possible that some mistake may be at the bottom of all this?"

"Mistake! dearest; none," said my mother. "None; none in the world; judge for yourself; read this, my love," and she placed in my hand a letter, addressed to herself, the seal of which was broken. I read it through with no small surprise. After some very fine complimentary flourishes upon my beauty and perfections, as, also, upon the antiquity and high reputation of our family, it went on to make a formal proposal of marriage, to be communicated or not to me at present, as my mother should deem expedient; and the letter wound up by a request that the writer might be permitted, upon our return to Ashtown-house, which was soon to take place, as the spring was now tolerably advanced, to visit us for a few days, in case his suit was approved.

"Well, well, my dear," said my mother, impatiently; "do you know who Lord Glenfallen is?"

"I do, madam," said I rather timidly, for I dreaded an altercation with my mother.

"Well, dear, and what frightens you?" continued she; "are you afraid of a title? What has he done to alarm you? he is neither old nor ugly."

I was silent, though I might have said, "he is neither young nor handsome."

"My dear Fanny," continued my mother, "in sober seriousness you have been most fortunate in engaging the affections of a nobleman such as Lord Glenfallen, young and wealthy, with first-rate, yes, acknowledged *first-rate* abilities, and of a family whose influence is not exceeded by that of any in Ireland—of course you see the offer in the same light that I do—indeed I think you *must*."

This was uttered in no very dubious tone. I was so much astonished by the suddenness of the whole communication that I literally did not know what to say.

"You are not in love?" said my mother, turning sharply, and fixing her dark eyes upon me, with severe scrutiny.

"No, madam," said I, promptly; horrified, as what young lady would not have been, at such a query.

"I'm glad to hear it," said my mother, drily. "Once, nearly twenty years ago, a friend of mine consulted me how he should deal with a daughter who had made what they call a love match, beggared herself, and disgraced her family; and I said, without hesitation, take no care for her, but cast her off; such punishment I awarded for an offence committed against the reputation of a family not my own; and what I advised respecting the child of another, with full as small compunction I would *do* with mine. I cannot conceive anything more unreasonable or intolerable than that the fortune and the character of a family should be marred by the idle caprices of a girl."

She spoke this with great severity, and paused as if she expected some observation from me. I, however, said nothing.

"But I need not explain to you, my dear Fanny," she continued, "my views upon this subject; you have always known them well, and I have never yet had reason to believe you likely, voluntarily, to offend me, or to abuse or neglect any of those advantages which reason and duty tell you should be improved—come hither, my dear, kiss me, and do not look so frightened. Well, now, about this letter, you need not answer it yet; of course you must be allowed time to make up your mind; in the mean time I will write to his lordship to give him my permission to visit us at Ashtown—good night, my love."

And thus ended one of the most disagreeable, not to say astounding, conversations I had ever had; it would not be easy to describe exactly what were my feelings towards Lord Glenfallen; whatever might have been my mother's suspicions, my heart was perfectly disengaged; and hitherto, although I had not been made in the slightest degree acquainted with his real views, I had liked him very much, as an agreeable, well informed man, whom I was always glad to meet in society; he had served in the navy in early life, and the polish which his manners received in his after intercourse with courts and cities had not served to obliterate that frankness of *manner* which belongs proverbially to the sailor. Whether this apparent candour went deeper than the outward bearing I was yet to learn; however there was no doubt that as far as I had seen of Lord Glenfallen, he was, though perhaps not so young as might have been desired in a lover, a singularly pleasing man, and whatever feeling unfavourable to him had found its way into my mind, arose altogether from the dread, not an unreasonable one, that constraint might be practised upon my inclinations. I reflected, however, that Lord Glenfallen was a wealthy man, and one highly thought of; and although I could never expect to love him in the romantic sense of the term, yet I had no doubt but that, all things considered, I might be more happy with him than I could hope to be at home. When next I met him it was with no small embarrassment, his tact and good breeding, however, soon reassured me, and effectually prevented my awkwardness being remarked upon; and I had the satisfaction of leaving Dublin for the country with the full conviction that nobody, not even those most intimate with me, even suspected the fact of Lord Glenfallen's having made me a formal proposal. This was to me a very serious subject of self gratulation, for, besides my instinctive dread of becoming the topic of the speculations of gossip, I felt that if the situation which I occupied in relation to him were made publicly known, I should stand committed in a manner which would scarcely leave me the power of retraction. The period at which Lord Glenfallen had arranged to visit Ashtown house was now fast approaching, and it became my mother's wish to form me thoroughly to her will, and to obtain my consent to the proposed marriage before his arrival, so that all things might proceed smoothly without apparent opposition or objection upon my part; whatever objections, therefore, I had entertained were to be subdued; whatever disposition to resistance I had exhibited or had been supposed to feel, were to be completely eradicated before he made his appearance, and my mother addressed herself to the task with a decision and energy against which even the barriers, which her imagination had created, could hardly have stood. If she had, however, expected any determined opposition from me, she was agreeably disappointed; my heart was perfectly free, and all my feelings of liking and preference were in favour of Lord Glinfallen, and I well knew that in case I refused to dispose of myself as I was desired, my mother had alike the power and the will to render my existence as utterly miserable as any, even the most ill-assorted marriage could possibly have done. You will remember, my good friend, that I was very young and very completely under the controul of my parents, both of whom, my mother particularly, were unscrupulously determined in matters of this kind, and willing, when voluntary obedience on the part of those within their power was withheld, to compel a forced acquiescence by an unsparing use of all the engines of the most stern and rigorous domestic discipline. All these combined, not unnaturally, induced me to resolve upon yielding at once, and without useless opposition, to what appeared almost to be my fate. The appointed time was come, and my now accepted suitor arrived; he was in high spirits, and, if possible, more entertaining than ever. I was not, however, quite in the mood to enjoy his sprightliness; but whatever I wanted in gaiety was amply made up in the triumphant and gracious good humour of my mother, whose smiles of benevolence and exultation were showered around as bountifully as the summer sunshine. I will not weary you with unnecessary prolixity. Let it suffice to say, that I was married to Lord Glenfallen with all the attendant pomp and circumstance of wealth, rank, and grandeur. According to the usage of the times, now humanely reformed, the ceremony was made until long past midnight, the season of wild, uproarious, and promiscuous feasting and revelry. Of all this I have a painfully vivid recollection, and particularly of the little annoyances inflicted upon me by the dull and coarse jokes of the wits and wags who abound in all such places, and upon all such occasions. I was not sorry, when, after a few days, Lord Glenfallen's carriage appeared at the door to convey us both from Ashtown; for any change would have been a relief from the irksomeness of ceremonial and formality which the visits received in honour of my newly acquired titles hourly entailed upon me. It was arranged that we were to proceed to Cahergillagh, one of the Glenfallen estates, lying, however, in a southern county, so that a tedious journey (then owing to the impracticability of the roads,) of three days intervened. I set forth with my noble companion, followed by the regrets of some, and by the envy of many, though God knows I little deserved the latter; the three days of travel were now almost spent, when passing the brow of a wild heathy hill, the domain of Cahergillagh opened suddenly upon our view. It formed a striking and a beautiful scene. A lake of considerable extent stretching away towards the west, and reflecting from its broad, smooth waters, the rich glow of the setting sun, was overhung by steep hills, covered by a rich mantle of velvet sward, broken here and there by the grey front of some old rock, and exhibiting on their shelving sides, their slopes and hollows, every variety of light and shade; a thick wood of dwarf oak, birch, and hazel skirted these hills, and clothed the shores of the lake, running out in rich luxuriance upon every promontory, and spreading upward considerably upon the side of the hills.

"There lies the enchanted castle," said Lord Glenfallen, pointing towards a considerable level space intervening between two of the picturesque hills, which rose dimly around the lake. This little plain was chiefly occupied by the same low, wild wood which covered the other parts of the domain; but towards the centre a mass of taller and statelier forest trees stood darkly grouped together, and among them stood an ancient square tower, with many buildings of an humbler character, forming together the manor-house, or, as it was more usually called, the court of Cahergillagh. As we approached the level upon which the mansion stood, the winding road gave us many glimpses of the time-worn castle and its surrounding buildings; and seen as it was through the long vistas of the fine old trees, and with the rich glow of evening upon it, I have seldom beheld an object more picturesquely striking. I was glad to perceive, too, that here and there the blue curling smoke ascended from stacks of chimneys now hidden by the rich, dark ivy, which, in a great measure, covered the building; other indications of comfort made themselves manifest as we approached; and indeed, though the place was evidently one of considerable antiquity, it had nothing whatever of the gloom of decay about it.

"You must not, my love," said Lord Glenfallen, "imagine this place worse than it is. I have no taste for antiquity, at least I should not choose a house to reside in because it is old. Indeed I do not recollect that I was even so romantic as to overcome my aversion to rats and rheumatism, those faithful attendants upon your noble relics of feudalism; and I much prefer a snug, modern, unmysterious bedroom, with well-aired sheets, to the waving tapestry, mildewed cushions, and all the other interesting appliances of romance; however, though I cannot promise you all the discomfort generally pertaining to an old castle, you will find legends and ghostly lore enough to claim your respect; and if old Martha be still to the fore, as I trust she is, you will soon have a supernatural and appropriate anecdote for every closet and corner of the mansion; but here we are—so, without more ado, welcome to Cahergillagh."

We now entered the hall of the castle, and while the domestics were employed in conveying our trunks and other luggage which he we had brought with us for immediate use to the apartments which Lord Glenfallen had selected for himself and me, I went with him into a spacious sitting room, wainscoted with finely polished black oak, and hung round with the portraits of various of the worthies of the Glenfallen family. This room looked out upon an extensive level covered with the softest green sward, and irregularly bounded by the wild wood I have before mentioned, through the leafy arcade formed by whose boughs and trunks the level beams of the setting sun were pouring; in the distance, a group of dairy maids were plying their task, which they accompanied throughout with snatches of Irish songs which, mellowed by the distance, floated not unpleasingly to the ear; and beside them sat or lay, with all the grave importance of conscious protection, six or seven large dogs of various kinds; farther in the distance, and through the cloisters of the arching wood, two or three ragged urchins were employed in driving such stray kine as had wandered farther than the rest to join their fellows. As I looked upon this scene which I have described, a feeling of tranquillity and happiness came upon me, which I have never experienced in so strong a degree; and so strange to me was the sensation that my eyes filled with tears. Lord Glenfallen mistook the cause of my emotion, and taking me kindly and tenderly by the hand he said, "Do not suppose, my love, that it is my intention to *settle* here, whenever you desire to leave this, you have only to let me know your wish and it shall be complied with, so I must entreat of you not to suffer any circumstances which I can controul to give you one moment's uneasiness; but here is old Martha, you must be introduced to her, one of the heir-looms of our family."

A hale, good-humoured, erect, old woman was Martha, and an agreeable contrast to the grim, decrepid hag, which my fancy had conjured up, as the depository of all the horrible tales in which I doubted not this old place was most fruitful. She welcomed me and her master with a profusion of gratulations, alternately kissing our hands and apologising for the liberty, until at length Lord Glenfallen put an end to this somewhat fatiguing ceremonial, by requesting her to conduct me to my chamber if it were prepared for my reception. I followed Martha up an old-fashioned, oak stair-case into a long, dim passage at the end of which lay the door which communicated with the apartments which had been selected for our use; here the old woman stopped, and respectfully requested me to proceed. I accordingly opened the door and was about to enter, when something like a mass of black tapestry as it appeared disturbed by my sudden approach, fell from above the door, so as completely to screen the aperture; the startling unexpectedness of the occurrence, and the rustling noise which the drapery made in its descent, caused me involuntarily to step two or three paces backwards, I turned, smiling and half ashamed to the old servant, and said, "You see what a coward I am." The woman looked puzzled, and without saying any more, I was about to draw aside the curtain and enter the room, when upon turning to do so, I was surprised to find that nothing whatever interposed to obstruct the passage. I went into the room, followed by the servant woman, and was amazed to find that it, like the one below, was wainscoted, and that nothing like drapery was to be found near the door.

"Where is it," said I; "what has become of it?"

"What does your ladyship wish to know?" said the old woman.

"Where is the black curtain that fell across the door, when I attempted first to come to my chamber," answered I.

"The cross of Christ about us," said the old woman, turning suddenly pale.

"What is the matter, my good friend," said I; "you seem frightened."

"Oh, no, no, your ladyship," said the old woman, endeavouring to conceal her agitation; but in vain, for tottering towards a chair, she sunk into it, looking so deadly pale and horror-struck that I thought every moment she would faint.

"Merciful God, keep us from harm and danger," muttered she at length.

"What can have terrified you so," said I, beginning to fear that she had seen something more than had met my eye, "you appear ill, my poor woman."

"Nothing, nothing, my lady," said she, rising; "I beg your ladyship's pardon for making so bold; may the great God defend us from misfortune."

"Martha," said I, "something *has* frightened you very much, and I insist on knowing what it is; your keeping me in the dark upon the subject will make me much more uneasy than any thing you could tell me; I desire you, therefore, to let me know what agitates you; I command you to tell me."

"Your ladyship said you saw a black curtain falling across the door when you were coming into the room," said the old woman.

"I did," said I; "but though the whole thing appears somewhat strange I cannot see any thing in the matter to agitate you so excessively.

"It's for no good you saw that, my lady," said the Crone; "something terrible is coming; its a sign, my lady—a sign that never fails."

"Explain, explain what you mean, my good woman," said I, in spite of myself, catching more than I could account for, of her superstitious terror.

"Whenever something—something *bad* is going to happen to the Glenfallen family, some one that belongs to them sees a black handkerchief or curtain just waved or falling before their faces; I saw it myself," continued she, lowering her voice, when I was only a little girl, and I'll never forget it; I often heard of it before, though I never saw it till then, nor since, praised be God; but I was going into Lady Jane's room to waken her in the morning; and sure enough when I got first to the bed and began to draw the curtain, something dark was waved across the division, but only for a moment; and when I saw rightly into the bed, there was she lying cold and dead, God be merciful to me; so my lady there is small blame to me to be daunted when any one of the family sees it; for its many's the story I heard of it, though I saw it but once."

I was not of a superstitious turn of mind; yet I could not resist a feeling of awe very nearly allied to the fear which my companion had so unreservedly expressed; and when you consider my situation, the loneliness, antiquity, and gloom of the place, you will allow that the weakness was not without excuse. In spite of old Martha's boding predictions, however, time flowed on in an unruffled course; one little incident, however, though trifling in itself, I must relate as it serves to make what follows more intelligible. Upon the day after my arrival, Lord Glenfallen of course desired to make me acquainted with the house and domain; and accordingly we set forth upon our ramble; when returning, he became for some time silent and moody, a state so unusual with him as considerably to excite my surprise, I endeavoured by observations and questions to arouse him—but in vain; at length as we approached the house, he said, as if speaking to himself, "'twere madness—madness—madness," repeating the word bitterly—"sure and speedy ruin." There was here a long pause; and at length turning sharply towards me in a tone very unlike that in which he had hitherto addressed me, he said,—"do you think it possible that a woman can keep a secret?"

"I am sure," said I, "that women are very much belied upon the score of talkativeness, and that I may answer your question with the same directness with which you put it; I reply that I *do* think a woman can keep a secret."

"But I do not," said he, drily.

We walked on in silence for a time; I was much astonished at his unwonted abruptness; I had almost said rudeness. After a considerable pause he seemed to recollect himself, and with an effort resuming his sprightly manner, he said, "well, well, the next thing to keeping a secret well is, not to desire to possess one—talkativeness and curiosity generally go together; now I shall make test of you in the first place, respecting the latter of these qualities. I shall be your *Bluebeard*—tush, why do I trifle thus; listen to me, my dear Fanny, I speak now in solemn earnest; what I desire is, intimately, inseparably, connected with your happiness and honour as well as my own; and your compliance with my request will not be difficult; it will impose upon you a very trifling restraint during your sojourn here, which certain events which have occurred since our arrival, have determined me shall not be a long one. You must promise me, upon your sacred honour, that you will visit *only* that part of the castle which can be reached from the front entrance, leaving the back entrance and the part of the building commanded immediately by it, to the menials, as also the small garden whose high wall you see yonder; and never at any time seek to pry or peep into them, nor to open the door which communicates from the front part of the house through the corridor with the back. I do not urge this in jest or in caprice, but from a solemn conviction that danger and misery will be the certain consequences of your not observing what I prescribe. I cannot explain myself further at present—promise me, then, these things as you hope for peace here and for mercy hereafter."

I did make the promise as desired, and he appeared relieved; his manner recovered all its gaiety and elasticity, but the recollection of the strange scene which I have just described dwelt painfully upon my mind. More than a month passed away without any occurrence worth recording; but I was not destined to leave Cahergillagh without further adventure; one day intending to enjoy the pleasant sunshine in a ramble through the woods, I ran up to my room to procure my bonnet and shawl; upon entering the chamber, I was surprised and somewhat startled to find it occupied; beside the fireplace and nearly opposite the door, seated in a large, old-fashioned elbow-chair, was placed the figure of a lady; she appeared to be nearer fifty than forty, and was dressed suitably to her age, in a handsome suit of flowered silk; she had a profusion of trinkets and jewellery about her person, and many rings upon her fingers; but although very rich, her dress was not gaudy or in ill taste; but what was remarkable in the lady was, that although her features were handsome, and upon the whole pleasing; the pupil of each eye was dimmed with the whiteness of cataract, and she was evidently stone blind. I was for some seconds so surprised at this unaccountable apparition, that I could not find words to address her.

"Madam," said I, "there must be some mistake here—this is my bedchamber."

"Marry come up," said the lady, sharply; "*your* chamber! Where is Lord Glenfallen?"

"He is below, madam," replied I; "and I am convinced he will be not a little surprised to find you here."

"I do not think he will," said she; "with your good leave, talk of what you know something about; tell him I want him; why does the minx dilly dally so?"

In spite of the awe which this grim lady inspired, there was something in her air of confident superiority which, when I considered our relative situations was not a little irritating.

"Do you know, madam to whom you speak," said I?

"I neither know nor care," said she; "but I presume that you are some one about the house, so, again, I desire you, if you wish to continue here, to bring your master hither forthwith."

"I must tell you madam," said I "that I am Lady Glenfallen."

"What's that," said the stranger, rapidly.

"I say, madam," I repeated, approaching her, that I might be more distinctly heard, "that I am Lady Glenfallen."

"Its a lie, you trull," cried she, in an accent which made me start, and, at the same time, springing forward, she seized me in her grasp and shook me violently, repeating, "its a lie, its a lie," with a rapidity and vehemence which swelled every vein of her face; the violence of her action, and the fury which convulsed her face, effectually terrified me, and disengaging myself from her grasp, I screamed as loud as I could for help; the blind woman continued to pour out a torrent of abuse upon me, foaming at the mouth with rage, and impotently shaking her clenched fists towards me. I heard Lord Glenfallen's step upon the stairs, and I instantly ran out; as I past him

I perceived that he was deadly pale, and just caught the words, "I hope that demon has not hurt you?" I made some answer, I forget what, and he entered the chamber, the door of which he locked upon the inside; what passed within I know not; but I heard the voices of the two speakers raised in loud and angry altercation. I thought I heard the shrill accents of the woman repeat the words, "let her look to herself;" but I could not be quite sure. This short sentence, however, was, to my alarmed imagination, pregnant with fearful meaning; the storm at length subsided, though not until after a conference of more than two long hours. Lord Glenfallen then returned, pale and agitated, "that unfortunate woman," said he, "is out of her mind; I dare say she treated you to some of her ravings, but you need not dread any further interruption from her, I have brought her so far to reason. She did not hurt you I trust."

"No, no," said I; "but she terrified me beyond measure."

"Well," said he, "she is likely to behave better for the future, and I dare swear that neither you nor she would desire after what has passed to meet again."

This occurrence, so startling and unpleasant, so involved in mystery, and giving rise to so many painful surmises, afforded me no very agreeable food for rumination. All attempts on my part to arrive at the truth were baffled; Lord Glenfallen evaded all my enquiries, and at length peremptorily forbid any further allusion to the matter. I was thus obliged to rest satisfied with what I had actually seen, and to trust to time to resolve the perplexities in which the whole transaction had involved me. Lord Glenfallen's temper and spirits gradually underwent a complete and most painful change; he became silent and abstracted, his manner to me was abrupt and often harsh, some grievous anxiety seemed ever present to his mind; and under its influence his spirits sunk and his temper became soured. I soon perceived that his gaiety was rather that which the stir and excitement of society produces, than the result of a healthy habit of mind; and every day confirmed me in the opinion, that the considerate good-nature which I had so much admired in him was little more than a mere manner; and to my infinite grief and surprise, the gay, kind, open-hearted nobleman who had for months followed and flattered me, was rapidly assuming the form of a gloomy, morose, and singularly selfish man; this was a bitter discovery, and I strove to conceal it from my myself as long as I could, but the truth was not to be denied, and I was forced to believe that Lord Glenfallen no longer loved me, and that he was at little pains to conceal the alteration in his sentiments. One morning after breakfast, Lord Glenfallen had been for some time walking silently up and down the room, buried in his moody reflections, when pausing suddenly, and turning towards me, he exclaimed,

"I have it, I have it; we must go abroad and stay there, too, and if that does not answer, why—why we must try some more effectual expedient. Lady Glenfallen, I have become involved in heavy embarrassments, a wife you know must share the fortunes of her husband, for better for worse, but I will waive my right if you prefer remaining here—here at Cahergillagh; for I would not have you seen elsewhere without the state to which your rank entitles you; besides it would break your poor mother's heart," he added, with sneering gravity, "so make up your mind—Cahergillagh or France. I will start if possible in a week, so determine between this and then."

He left the room, and in a few moments I saw him ride past the window, followed by a mounted servant; he had directed a domestic to inform me that he should not be back until the next day. I was in very great doubt as to what course of conduct I should pursue, as to accompanying him in the continental tour so suddenly determined upon, I felt that it would be a hazard too great to encounter; for at Cahergillagh I had always the consciousness to sustain me, that if his temper at any time led him into violent or unwarrantable treatment of me, I had a remedy within reach, in the protection and support of my own family, from all useful and effective communication with whom, if once in France, I should be entirely debarred. As to remaining at Cahergillagh in solitude, and for aught I knew, exposed to hidden dangers, it appeared to me scarcely less objectionable than the former proposition; and yet I feared that with one or other I must comply, unless I was prepared to come to an actual breach with Lord Glenfallen;

full of these unpleasing doubts and perplexities, I retired to rest. I was wakened, after having slept uneasily for some hours, by some person shaking me rudely by the shoulder; a small lamp burned in my room, and by its light, to my horror and amazement, I discovered that my visitant was the self-same blind, old lady who had so terrified me a few weeks before. I started up in the bed, with a view to ring the bell, and alarm the domestics, but she instantly anticipated me by saying, "do not be frightened, silly girl; if I had wished to harm you I could have done it while you were sleeping, I need not have wakened you; listen to me, now, attentively and fearlessly; for what I have to say, interests you to the full as much as it does me; tell me, here, in the presence of God, did Lord Glenfallen marry you, *actually marry* you?—speak the truth, woman."

"As surely as I live and speak," I replied, "did Lord Glenfallen marry me in presence of more than a hundred witnesses."

"Well," continued she, "he should have told you *then*, before you married him, that he had a wife living, which wife I am; I feel you tremble—tush! do not be frightened. I do not mean to harm you—mark me now—you are *not* his wife. When I make my story known you will be so, neither in the eye of God nor of man; you must leave this house upon to-morrow; let the world know that your husband has another wife living; go, you, into retirement, and leave him to justice, which will surely overtake him. If you remain in this house after to-morrow you will reap the bitter fruits of your sin," so saying, she quitted the room, leaving me very little disposed to sleep.

Here was food for my very worst and most terrible suspicions; still there was not enough to remove all doubt. I had no proof of the truth of this woman's statement. Taken by itself there was nothing to induce me to attach weight to it; but when I viewed it in connection with the extraordinary mystery of some of Lord Glenfallen's proceedings, his strange anxiety to exclude me from certain portions of the mansion, doubtless, lest I should encounter this person—the strong influence, nay, command, which she possessed over him, a circumstance clearly established by the very fact of her residing in the very place, where of all others, he should least have desired to find her—her thus acting, and continuing to act in direct contradiction to his wishes; when I say I viewed her disclosure in connection with all these circumstances, I could not help feeling that there was at least a fearful veri-similitude in the allegations which she had made. Still I was not satisfied, nor nearly so; young minds have a reluctance almost insurmountable to believing upon any thing short of unquestionable proof, the existence of premeditated guilt in any one whom they have ever trusted; and in support of this feeling I was assured that if the assertion of Lord Glenfallen, which nothing in this woman's manner had led me to disbelieve, were true, namely, that her mind was unsound, the whole fabric of my doubts and fears must fall to the ground. I determined to state to Lord Glenfallen freely and accurately the substance of the communication which I had just heard, and in his words and looks to seek for its proof or refutation; full of these thoughts I remained wakeful and excited all night, every moment fancying that I heard the step, or saw the figure of my recent visitor towards whom I felt a species of horror and dread which I can hardly describe. There was something in her face, though her features had evidently been handsome, and were not, at first sight, unpleasing, which, upon a nearer inspection, seemed to indicate the habitual prevalence and indulgence of evil passions, and a power of expressing mere animal anger, with an intenseness that I have seldom seen equalled, and to which an almost unearthly effect was given by the convulsive quivering of the sightless eyes. You may easily suppose that it was no very pleasing reflection to me to consider, that whenever caprice might induce her to return, I was within the reach of this violent, and, for aught I knew, insane woman, who had, upon that very night, spoken to me in a tone of menace, of which her mere words, divested of the manner and look with which she uttered them, can convey but a faint idea. Will you believe me when I tell you that I was actually afraid to leave my bed in order to secure the door, lest I should again encounter the dreadful object lurking in some corner or peeping from behind the window curtains, so very a child was I in my fears.

The morning came, and with it Lord Glenfallen. I knew not, and indeed I cared not, where he might have been; my thoughts were wholly engrossed by the terrible fears and suspicions which my last night's conference had suggested to me; he was, as usual, gloomy and abstracted, and I feared in no very fitting mood to hear what I had to say with patience, whether the charges were true or false. I was, however, determined not to suffer the opportunity to pass, or Lord Glenfallen to leave the room, until, at all hazards, I had unburdened my mind.

"My Lord," said I, after a long silence, summoning up all my firmness, "my lord, I wish to say a few words to you upon a matter of very great importance, of very deep concernment to you and to me." I fixed my eyes upon him to discern, if possible, whether the announcement caused him any uneasiness, but no symptom of any such feeling was perceptible.

"Well, my dear," said he, "this is, no doubt, a very grave preface, and portends, I have no doubt, something extraordinary—pray let us have it without more ado."

"He took a chair, and seated himself nearly opposite to me.

"My lord," said I, "I have seen the person who alarmed me so much a short time since, the blind lady, again, upon last night;" his face upon which my eyes were fixed, turned pale, he he hesitated for a moment, and then said—

"And did you, pray madam, so totally forget or spurn my express command, as to enter that portion of the house from which your promise, I might say, your oath, excluded you—answer me that?" he added, fiercely.

"My lord," said I, "I have neither forgotten your *commands*, since such they were, nor disobeyed them. I was, last night, wakened from my sleep, as I lay in my own chamber, and accosted by the person whom I have mentioned—how she found access to the room I cannot pretend to say."

"Ha! this must be looked to," said he, half reflectively; "and pray," added he, quickly, while in turn he fixed his eyes upon me, "what did this person say, since some comment upon her communication forms, no doubt, the sequel to your preface."

"Your lordship is not mistaken," said I, "her statement was so extraordinary that I could not think of withholding it from you; she told me, my lord, that you had a wife living at the time you married me, and that she was that wife."

Lord Glenfallen became ashy pale, almost livid; he made two or three efforts to clear his voice to speak, but in vain, and turning suddenly from me, he walked to the window; the horror and dismay, which, in the olden time, overwhelmed the woman of Endor, when her spells unexpectedly conjured the dead into her presence, were but types of what I felt, when thus presented with what appeared to be almost unequivocal evidence of the guilt, whose existence I had before so strongly doubted. There was a silence of some moments, during which it were hard to conjecture whether I or my companion suffered most. Lord Glenfallen soon recovered his self command; he returned to the table, again sat down and said—

"What you have told me has so astonished me, has unfolded such a tissue of motiveless guilt, and in a quarter from which I had so little reason to look for ingratitude or treachery, that your announcement almost deprived me of speech; the person in in question, however, has one excuse, her mind is, as I told you before, unsettled. You should have remembered that, and hesitated to receive as unexceptionable evidence against the honour of your husband, the ravings of a lunatic. I now tell you that this is the last time I shall speak to you upon this subject, and, in the presence of the God who is to judge me, and as I hope for mercy in the day of judgment, I swear that the charge thus brought against me, is utterly false, unfounded, and ridiculous; I defy the world in any point to taint my honour; and, as I have never taken the opinion of madmen touching your character or morals, I think it but fair to require that you will evince a like tenderness for me; and now, once for all, never again dare to repeat to me your insulting suspicions, or the clumsy and infamous calumnies of fools. I shall instantly let the worthy lady who contrived this somewhat original device, understand fully my opinion upon the matter—good morning;" and with these words he left me again in doubt, and involved in all horrors of the most agonizing suspense. I had reason to think that Lord Glenfallen wreaked his vengeance upon the author of the strange story which I had heard, with a violence which was not satisfied with mere words, for old Martha, with whom

I was a great favourite, while attending me in my room, told me that she feared her master had ill used the poor, blind, Dutch woman, for that she had heard her scream as if the very life were leaving her, but added a request that I should not speak of what she had told me to any one, particularly to the master.

"How do you know that she is a Dutch woman?" inquired I, anxious to learn anything whatever that might throw a light upon the history of this person, who seemed to have resolved to mix herself up in my fortunes.

"Why, my lady," answered Martha, "the master often calls her the Dutch hag, and other names you would not like to hear, and I am sure she is neither English nor Irish; for, whenever they talk together, they speak some queer foreign lingo, and fast enough, I'll be bound; but I ought not to talk about her at all; it might be as much as my place is worth to mention her—only you saw her first yourself, so there can be no great harm in speaking of her now."

"How long has this lady been here?" continued I.

"She came early on the morning after your ladyship's arrival," answered she; "but do not ask me any more, for the master would think nothing of turning me out of doors for daring to speak of her at all, much less to *you*, my lady."

I did not like to press the poor woman further; for her reluctance to speak on this topic was evident and strong. You will readily believe that upon the very slight grounds which my information afforded, contradicted as it was by the solemn oath of my husband, and derived from what was, at best, a very questionable source, I could not take any very decisive measure whatever; and as to the menace of the strange woman who had thus unaccountably twice intruded herself into my chamber, although, at the moment, it occasioned me some uneasiness, it was not, even in my eyes, sufficiently formidable to induce my departure from Cahergillagh.

A few nights after the scene which I have just mentioned, Lord Glenfallen having, as usual, early retired to his study, I was left alone in the parlour to amuse myself as best I might. It was not strange that my thoughts should often recur to the agitating scenes in which I had recently taken a part; the subject of my reflections, the solitude, the silence, and the lateness of the hour, as also the depression of spirits to which I had of late been a constant prey, tended to produce that nervous excitement which places us wholly at the mercy of the imagination. In order to calm my spirits, I was endeavouring to direct my thoughts into some more pleasing channel, when I heard, or thought I heard, uttered, within a few yards of me, in an odd half-sneering tone, the words, "There is blood upon your ladyship's throat." So vivid was the impression, that I started to my feet, and involuntarily placed my hand upon my neck. I looked around the room for the speaker, but in vain. I went then to the room-door, which I opened, and peered into the passage, nearly faint with horror, lest some leering, shapeless thing should greet me upon the threshold. When I had gazed long enough to assure myself that no strange object was within sight.

"I have been too much of a rake, lately; I am racking out my nerves," said I, speaking aloud, with a view to re-assure myself. I rang the bell, and, attended by old Martha, I retired to settle for the night. While the servant was, as was her custom, arranging the lamp which I have already stated always burned during the night in my chamber, I was employed in undressing, and, in doing so, I had recourse to a large looking-glass which occupied a considerable portion of the wall in which it was fixed, rising from the ground to a height of about six feet; this mirror filled the space of a large pannel in the wainscoting opposite the foot of the bed. I had hardly been before it for the lapse of a minute, when something like a black pall was slowly waved between me and it.

"Oh, God! there it is," I exclaimed wildly. "I have seen it again, Martha—the black cloth."

"God be merciful to us, then!" answered she, tremulously crossing herself. "Some misfortune is over us."

"No, no, Martha," said I, almost instantly recovering my collectedness; for, although of a nervous temperament, I had never been superstitious. "I do not believe in omens. You know, I saw, or fancied I saw, this thing before, and nothing followed.

"The Dutch lady came the next morning," replied she.

"Methinks, such an occurrence scarcely deserved a supernatural announcement," I replied.

"She is a strange woman, my lady," said Martha, "and she is not *gone* yet—mark my words."

"Well, well, Martha," said I, "I have not wit enough to change your opinions, nor inclination to alter mine; so I will talk no more of the matter. Good night," and so I was left to my reflections. After lying for about an hour awake, I at length fell into a kind of doze; but my imagination was still busy, for I was startled from this unrefreshing sleep by fancying that I heard a voice close to my face exclaim as before, "There is blood upon your ladyship's throat." The words were instantly followed by a loud burst of laughter. Quaking with horror, I awakened, and heard my husband enter the room. Even this was a relief. Scared as I was, however, by the tricks which my imagination had played me, I preferred remaining silent, and pretending to sleep, to attempting to engage my husband in conversation, for I well knew that his mood was such, that his words would not, in all probability, convey anything that had not better be unsaid and unheard. Lord Glenfallen went into his dressing-room, which lay upon the right-hand side of the bed. The door lying open, I could see him by himself, at full length upon a sofa, and, in about half an hour, I became aware, by his deep and regularly drawn respiration, that he was fast asleep. When slumber refuses to visit one, there is something peculiarly irritating, not to the temper, but to the nerves, in the consciousness that some one is in your immediate presence, actually enjoying the boon which you are seeking in vain; at least, I have always found it so, and never more than upon the present occasion. A thousand annoying imaginations harrassed and excited me, every object which I looked upon, though ever so familiar, seemed to have acquired a strange phantom-like character, the varying shadows thrown by the flickering of the lamp-light, seemed shaping themselves into grotesque and unearthly forms, and whenever my eyes wandered to the sleeping figure of my husband, his features appeared to undergo the strangest and most demoniacal contortions. Hour after hour was told by the old clock, and each succeeding one found me, if possible, less inclined to sleep than its predecessor. It was now considerably past three; my eyes, in their involuntary wanderings, happened to alight upon the large mirror which was, as I have said, fixed in the wall opposite the foot of the bed. A view of it was commanded from where I lay, through the curtains, as I gazed fixedly upon it, I thought I perceived the broad sheet of glass shifting its position in relation to the bed; I rivetted my eyes upon it with intense scrutiny; it was no deception, the mirror, as if acting of its own impulse, moved slowly aside, and disclosed a dark aperture in the wall, nearly as large as an ordinary door; a figure evidently stood in this; but the light was too dim to define it accurately. It stepped cautiously into the chamber, and with so little noise, that had I not actually seen it, I do not think I should have been aware of its presence. It was arrayed in a kind of woollen night-dress, and a white handkerchief or cloth was bound tightly about the head; I had no difficulty spite of the strangeness of the attire in recognising the blind woman whom I so much dreaded. She stooped down, bringing her head nearly to the ground, and in that attitude she remained motionless for some moments, no doubt in order to ascertain if any suspicious sound were stirring. She was apparently satisfied by her observations, for she immediately recommenced her silent progress towards a ponderous mahogany dressing table of my husband's; when she had reached it, she paused again, and appeared to listen attentively for some minutes; she then noiselessly opened one of the drawers from which, having groped for some time, she took something which I soon perceived to be a case of razors; she opened it and tried the edge of each of the two instruments upon the skin of her hand; she quickly selected one, which she fixed firmly in her grasp; she now stooped down as before, and having listened for a time, she, with the hand that was disengaged, groped her way into the dressing room where Lord Glenfallen lay fast asleep. I was fixed as if in the tremendous spell of a night mare. I could not stir even a finger; I could not lift my voice; I could not even breathe, and though I expected every moment to see the sleeping man murdered, I could not even close my eyes to shut out the horrible spectacle, which I had not the power to avert. I saw the woman approach the sleeping figure, she laid the unoccupied hand lightly along his clothes, and having thus ascertained his identity, she, after a brief interval, turned back and again entered my chamber; here she bent down again to listen. I had now not a doubt but that the razor was intended for my throat; yet the terrific fascination which had locked all my powers so long, still continued to bind me fast. I felt that my life depended upon the slightest ordinary exertion, and yet I could not stir one joint from the position in which I lay, nor even make noise enough to waken Lord Glenfallen. The murderous woman now, with long, silent steps, approached the bed; my very heart seemed turning to ice; her left hand, that which was disengaged, was upon the pillow; she gradually slid it forward towards my head, and in an instant, with the speed of lightning, it was clutched in my hair, while, with the other hand, she dashed the razor at my throat. A slight inaccuracy saved me from instant death; the blow fell short, the point of the razor grazing my throat; in a moment I know not how, I found myself at the other side of the bed uttering shriek after shriek; the wretch was, however, determined if possible to murder me, scrambling along by the curtains; she rushed round the bed towards me; I seized the handle of the door to make my escape; it was, however, fastened; at all events I could not open it, from the mere instinct of recoiling terror, I shrunk back into a corner—she was now within a yard of me—her hand was upon my face—I closed my eyes fast, expecting never to open them again, when a blow, inflicted from behind by a strong arm, stretched the monster senseless at my feet; at the same moment the door opened, and several domestics, alarmed by my cries, entered the apartment. I do not recollect what followed, for I fainted. One swoon succeeded another so long and death-like, that my life was considered very doubtful. At about ten o'clock, however, I sunk into a deep and refreshing sleep, from which I was awakened at about two, that I might swear my deposition before a magistrate, who attended for that purpose. I, accordingly, did so, as did also Lord Glenfallen; and the woman was fully committed to stand her trial at the ensuing assizes. I shall never forget the scene which the examination of the blind woman and of the other parties afforded. She was brought into the room in the custody of two servants; she wore a kind of flannel wrapper which had not been changed since the night before; it was torn and soiled, and here and there smeared with blood, which had flowed in large quantities from a wound in her head; the white handkerchief had fallen off in the scuffle; and her grizzled hair fell in masses about her wild and deadly pale countenance. She appeared perfectly composed, however, and the only regret she expressed throughout, was at not having succeeded in her attempt, the object of which she did not pretend to conceal. On being asked her name, she called herself the Countess Glenfallen, and refused to give any other title.

"The woman's name is Flora Van-Kemp," said Lord Glenfallen.

"It *was*, it *was*, you perjured traitor and cheat," screamed the woman; and then there followed a volley of words in some foreign language. "Is there a magistrate here," she resumed; "I am Lord Glenfallen's wife—I'll prove it—write down my words. I am willing to be hanged or burned, so *he* meets his deserts. I did try to kill that doll of his; but it was he who put it into my head to do it—two wives were too many—I was to murder her, or she was to hang me—listen to all I have to say."

Here Lord Glenfallen interrupted.

"I think sir," said he, addressing the magistrate, "that we had better proceed to business, this unhappy woman's furious recriminations but waste our time; if she refuses to answer your questions, you had better, I presume, take my depositions."

"And are you going to swear away my life, you black perjured murderer?" shrieked the woman. "Sir, sir, sir, you must hear me," she continued, addressing the magistrate, "I can convict him—he bid me murder that girl, and then when I failed, he came behind me, and struck me down, and now he wants to swear away my life—take down all I say."

"If it is your intention," said the magistrate, "to confess the crime with which you stand charged, you may, upon producing sufficient evidence, criminate whom you please."

"Evidence!—I have no evidence but myself," said the woman. "I will swear it all—write down my testimony—write it down, I say—we shall hang side by side, my brave Lord—all your own handy-work, my gentle husband." This was followed by a low, insolent, and sneering laugh, which, from one in her situation, was sufficiently horrible.

"I will not at present hear anything," replied he, "but distinct answers to the questions which I shall put to you upon this matter."

"Then you shall hear nothing," replied she sullenly, and no inducement or intimidation could bring her to speak again.

Lord Glenfallen's deposition and mine were then given, as also those of the servants who had entered the room at the moment of my rescue; the magistrate then intimated that she was committed, and must proceed directly to gaol, whither she was brought in a carriage of Lord Glenfallen's, for his lordship was naturally by no means indifferent to the effect which her vehement accusations against himself might produce, if uttered before every chance hearer whom she might meet with between Cahergillagh and the place of confinement whither she was dispatched.

During the time which intervened between the committal and the trial of the prisoner, Lord Glenfallen seemed to suffer agonies of mind which baffle all description, he hardly ever slept, and when he did, his slumbers seemed but the instruments of new tortures, and his waking hours were, if possible, exceeded in intensity of terrors by the dreams which disturbed his sleep. Lord Glenfallen rested, if to lie in the mere attitude of repose were to do so, in his dressing-room, and thus I had an opportunity of witnessing, far oftener than I wished it, the fearful workings of his mind; his agony often broke out into such fearful paroxysms that delirium and total loss of reason appeared to be impending; he frequently spoke of flying from the country, and bringing with him all the witnesses of the appalling scene upon which the prosecution was founded; then again he would fiercely lament that the blow which he had inflicted had not ended all.

The assizes arrived, however, and upon the day appointed, Lord Glenfallen and I attended in order to give our evidence. The cause was called on, and the prisoner appeared at the bar. Great curiosity and interest were felt respecting the trial, so that the court was crowded to excess. The prisoner, however, without appearing to take the trouble of listening to the indictment, pleaded guilty, and no representations on the part of the court, availed to induce her to retract her plea. After much time had been wasted in a fruitless attempt to prevail upon her to reconsider her words, the court proceeded according to the usual form, to pass sentence. This having been done, the prisoner was about to be removed, when she said in a low, distinct voice—

"A word—a word, my Lord:—is Lord Glenfallen here in the court?" On being told that he was, she raised her voice to a tone of loud menace, and continued—

"Hardress, Earl of Glenfallen, I accuse you here in this court of justice of two crimes,—first, that you married a second wife, while the first was living, and again, that you prompted me to the murder, for attempting which I am to die;—secure him—chain him—bring him here."

There was a laugh through the court at these words, which were naturally treated by the judge as a violent extemporary recrimination, and the woman was desired to be silent.

"You wont take him, then," she said, "you wont try him? You'll let him go free?"

It was intimated by the court that he would certainly be allowed "to go free," and she was ordered again to be removed. Before, however, the mandate was executed, she threw her arms wildly into the air, and uttered one piercing shriek so full of preternatural rage and despair, that it might fitly have ushered a soul into those realms where hope can come no more. The sound still rang in my ears, months after the voice that had uttered it was for ever silent. The wretched woman was executed in accordance with the sentence which had been pronounced.

For some time after this event, Lord Glenfallen appeared, if possible, to suffer more than he had done before, and altogether, his language, which often amounted to half confessions of the guilt imputed to him, and all the circumstances connected with the late occurrences, formed a mass of evidence so convincing that I wrote to my father, detailing the grounds of my fears, and imploring him to come to Cahergillagh without delay, in order to remove me from my husband's control, previously to taking legal steps for a final separation. Circumstanced as I was, my existence was little short of intolerable, for, besides the fearful suspicions which attached to my husband, I plainly perceived that if Lord Glenfallen were not relieved, and that speedily, insanity must supervene. I therefore expected my father's arrival, or at least a letter to announce it, with indescribable impatience.

About a week after the execution had taken place, Lord Glenfallen one morning met me with an unusually sprightly air—

"Fanny," said he, "I have it now for the first time, in my power to explain to your satisfaction every thing which has hitherto appeared suspicious or mysterious in my conduct. After breakfast come with me to my study, and I shall, I hope, make all things clear."

This invitation afforded me more real pleasure than I had experienced for months; something had certainly occurred to tranquillize my husband's mind, in no ordinary degree, and I thought it by no means impossible that he would, in the proposed interview, prove himself the most injured and innocent of men. Full of this hope I repaired to his study at the appointed hour; he was writing busily when I entered the room, and just raising his eyes, he requested me to be seated. I took a chair as he desired, and remained silently awaiting his leisure, while he finished, folded, directed, and sealed his letter; laying it then upon the table, with the address downward, he said—

"My dearest Fanny, I know I must have appeared very strange to you and very unkind—often even cruel; before the end of this week I will show you the necessity of my conduct; how impossible it was that I should have seemed otherwise. I am conscious that many acts of mine must have inevitably given rise to painful suspicions—suspicions, which indeed, upon one occasion you very properly communicated to me. I have gotten two letters from a quarter which commands respect, containing information as to the course by which I may be enabled to prove the negative of all the crimes which even the most credulous suspicion could lay to my charge. I expected a third by this morning's post, containing documents which will set the matter for ever at rest, but owing, no doubt, to some neglect, or, perhaps, to some difficulty in collecting the papers, some inevitable delay, it has not come to hand this morning, according to my expectation. I was finishing one to the very same quarter when you came in, and if a sound rousing be worth any thing, I think I shall have a special messenger before two days have passed. I have been thinking over the matter within myself, whether I had better imperfectly clear up your doubts by submitting to your inspection the two letters which I have already received, or wait till I can triumphantly vindicate myself by the production of the documents which I have already mentioned, and I have, I think, not unnaturally decided upon the latter course; however, there is a person in the next room, whose testimony is not without its value—excuse me for one moment."

So saying, he arose and went to the door of a closet which opened from the study, this he unlocked, and half opening the door, he said, "it is only I," and then slipped into the room, and carefully closed and locked the door behind him. I immediately heard his voice in animated conversation; my curiosity upon the subject of the letter was naturally great, so smothering any little scruples which I might have felt, I resolved to look at the address of the letter which lay as my husband had left it, with its face upon the table. I accordingly drew it over to me, and turned up the direction. For two or three moments I could scarce believe my eyes, but there could be no mistake—in large characters were traced the words, "To the Archangel Gabriel in heaven." I had scarcely returned the letter to its original position, and in some degree recovered the shock which this unequivocal proof of insanity produced, when the closet door was unlocked, and Lord Glenfallen re-entered the study, carefully closing and locking the door again upon the outside.

"Whom have you there?" inquired I, making a strong effort to appear calm.

"Perhaps," said he musingly, "you might have some objection to seeing her, at least for a time."

"Who is it?" repeated I.

"Why," said he, "I see no use in hiding it—the blind Dutchwoman; I have been with her the whole morning. She is very anxious to get out of that closet, but you know she is odd, she is scarcely to be trusted."

A heavy gust of wind shook the door at this moment with a sound as if something more substantial were pushing against it.

"Ha, ha, ha!—do you hear her," said he, with an obstreperous burst of laughter. The wind died away in a long howl, and Lord Glenfallen, suddenly checking his merriment, shrugged his shoulders, and muttered—

"Poor devil, she has been hardly used."

"We had better not tease her at present with questions," said I, in as unconcerned a tone as I could assume, although I felt every moment as if I should faint.

"Humph! may be so," said he, "well come back in an hour or two, or when you please, and you will find us here."

He again unlocked the door, and entered with the same precautions which he had adopted before, locking the door upon the inside, and as I hurried from the room, I heard his voice again exerted as if in eager parley. I can hardly describe my emotions; my hopes had been raised to the highest, and now in an instant, all was gone—the dreadful consummation was accomplished—the fearful retribution had fallen upon the guilty man—the mind was destroyed—the power to repent was gone. The agony of the hours which followed what I would still call my *awful* interview with Lord Glenfallen, I cannot describe; my solitude was, however, broken in upon by Martha, who came to inform me of the arrival of a gentleman, who expected me in the parlour. I accordingly descended, and to my great joy, found my father seated by the fire. This expedition, upon his part, was easily accounted for: my communications had touched the honor of the family. I speedily informed him of the dreadful malady which had fallen upon the wretched man. My father suggested the necessity of placing some person to watch him, to prevent his injuring himself or others. I rang the bell, and desired that one Edward Cooke, an attached servant of the family, should be sent to me. I told him distinctly and briefly, the nature of the service required of him, and, attended by him, my father and I proceeded at once to the study; the door of the inner room was still closed, and everything in the outer chamber remained in the same order in which I had left it. We then advanced to the closet door, at which we knocked, but without receiving any answer. We next tried to open the door, but in vain—it was locked upon the inside; we knocked more loudly, but in vain. Seriously alarmed, I desired the servant to force the door, which was, after several violent efforts, accomplished, and we entered the closet. Lord Glenfallen was lying on his face upon a sofa.

"Hush," said I, "he is asleep;" we paused for a moment.

"He is too still for that," said my father; we all of us felt a strong reluctance to approach the figure.

"Edward," said I, "try whether your master sleeps."

The servant approached the sofa where Lord Glenfallen lay; he leant his ear towards the head of the recumbent figure, to ascertain whether the sound of breathing was audible; he turned towards us, and said—

"My Lady, you had better not wait here, I am sure he is dead!"

"Let me see the face," said I, terribly agitated, "you *may* be mistaken."

The man then, in obedience to my command, turned the body round, and, gracious God! what a sight met my view;—he was, indeed, perfectly dead. The whole breast of the shirt, with its lace frill, was drenched with gore, as was the couch underneath the spot where he lay. The head hung back, as it seemed almost severed from the body by a frightful gash, which yawned across the throat. The instrument which had inflicted it, was found under his body. All, then, was over; I was never to learn the history in whose termination I had been so deeply and so tragically involved.

The severe discipline which my mind had undergone was not bestowed in vain. I directed my thoughts and my hopes to that place where there is no more sin, nor danger, nor sorrow.

Thus ends a brief tale, whose prominent incidents many will recognize as having marked the history of a distinguished family, and though it refers to a somewhat distant date, we shall be found not to have taken, upon that account, any liberties with the facts, but in our statement of all the incidents, to have rigorously and faithfully adhered to the truth.

PAWN-BROKING IN IRELAND.

MR. BARRINGTON'S SUGGESTIONS.—CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS OF LIMERICK.

A WORK like ours, undertaking to present its readers with a living picture of all events of public moment occurring in the land from whence it proceeds, would inadequately discharge its functions, if it did not sometimes call attention to other matters than the sickening details of popular crime and ministerial connivance, which form the necessary materials of every true statement of Irish politics. It is with no small pleasure that we turn from the dreary and revolting subjects, with which we are too often forced to employ our pen, to enjoy for a few moments with our readers, the refreshing privilege of contemplating one of the most remarkable and singularly useful institutions which a spirit of improvement, of benevolence, and true patriotism have for many years succeeded in establishing in Ireland. It is true that the charitable pawn office erected by Matthew Barrington in the city of Limerick, is but a small and isolated local institution; but we observe in it the beginning of a complete and noble revolution in the system whereby our charitable establishments are now supported, and we regard the success of the sagacious experiment with an interest proportioned to the grandeur of the results which are likely to flow from it. The abuses which have long abounded in the trade of pawn-broking in Ireland, and the disastrous consequences to which even its strictly legal exercise too often leads, have for years furnished the press of this country with great and ample matter of complaint. At the petition of Matthew Barrington, Esq in the year 1838, a committe of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the state of pawn-broking in Ireland; the evidence accumulated by which, exhibits a mass of abuse and mal-operation, which cries aloud for corrective legislation. It is not our purpose, however, to speculate upon the immediate alterations which will probably be effected in the conduct of the trade, but to notice briefly the valuable suggestions of Mr. Barrington, which, if adopted and carried out, will eventually overturn and utterly destroy the present fabric, with all its crooked passages and dark recesses, and erect in its stead a system of perfect symmetry, beauty, and usefulness.

We have before us "an address to the inhabitants of Limerick, by Matthew Barrington, Esq., on the opening of the *Mont de Piété*, a charitable pawn office for the support of Barrington's hospital in that city." The title of this pamphlet sufficiently expresses its subject, and that upon which we purpose for a few minutes to dwell. In the course of its perusal we have tested the accuracy of Mr. Barrington's calculations, by frequent reference to the minutes of the evidence taken before the select committee of the House of Commons; and the consequence is, that we have been compelled to admit as incontrovertible the truth of statements which at first sight appeared so extraordinary and so startling, as to transcend all belief. In the year 1831 the "city of Limerick infirmary" was opened, and by the act of Geo. IV. entitled "an act for the management and direction of the hospital founded by Joseph Barrington and his sons, in the city of Limerick," its governors are incorporated as the governors of Barrington's hospital and city of Limerick infirmary. The extensive usefulness of this institution is best proved by the following brief report:—

"Since its opening, on the 5th Nov. 1831, there were admitted, Interns, 1288.

Discharged cured	876	
Relieved	284	
Died	89	
Incurable	6	
Remaining under treatment	33	
		—1,288

"Externs prescribed for, relieved and supplied with medicine in the infirmary, 43,640.

"During the prevalence of cholera in 1833, the governors having allowed the hospital to be used for persons afflicted with that disease, 1,537 were admitted, of whom 986 were discharged cured, and above 1,000 externs were relieved."

Mr. M. Barrington's address proceeds to say—

"I trust that the public are now fully aware of the very great benefit which the hospital has conferred upon the poor of Limerick, since its opening in the year 1831, especially during the prevalence of cholera in 1833; but little do they know the extent to which applications for admission are daily increasing, and how frequently the governors are obliged (from the insufficiency of the funds at their disposal) to refuse admission to deserving objects.

"The difficulties which the governors have had to encounter in procuring adequate funds for its support, though aided by donations, some subscriptions, and collections in the churches and chapels of this city and its liberties, and their anxiety to extend its benefits by adding to the number of intern patients, (for which there is ample accommodation,) have led me to inquire by what means similar establishments have been supported in other parts of Europe.

"The result of these inquiries satisfactorily proves the utility of the *Monts de Piété*, and that the principal hospitals in France, Italy, Germany, and other parts of the Continent are sustained out of their profits."

Mr. Barrington then enters upon an historical inquiry into the origin and progress of these institutions—an investigation by no means devoid of interest. To Italy, it appears, belongs the honour of their first establishment, and in the course of the fifteenth century they had obtained a permanent footing in nearly all the principal cities of that country. Other nations soon perceived the advantages of these loan funds, which, having taken root in the south, gradually spread towards the north of Europe, and in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they were received into Germany, Holland and France.

As the arrangements of the *Mont de Piété* established in Bordeaux, closely resemble those adopted for the regulation of his own institution by Mr. Barrington, we here insert them along with his observations.

"The *Monts de Piété* were soon established in every part of France, and the regulations for raising the capital at Bourdeaux are worthy of attention, for by the Ordinance of 1804 & 6, it is provided that—

"'The capital of the establishment is to be £24,000, to be raised by shares or loans; eight per cent. interest to be paid to lenders, and the property of the hospitals to become security to them: this capital to be divided into single shares of £160, which may be sub-divided into half shares. The shareholder's certificate shall be transferable by endorsement, but all transfers must be registered at the *Mont de Piété*. Shareholders may, at the end of three years, withdraw the amount of their shares, on giving three months' notice. The profits are to be divided into two equal shares—one to belong to the hospitals, the other to the shareholders. The portion belonging to the hospitals to be applied first to the completing the necessary number of shares, until the subscribed sum shall thus have been made to amount to the above sum of £24,000; it is next to be applied to the payment of such shareholders as may wish to withdraw; then to the purchase of the shares of the other holders, who shall be bound to receive back their subscribed principal sums, according to the order of their shares, which shall be determined by lot: thus eventually the whole of the shares will belong to the hospitals.

"'Trustees of charities may lend the funds of their establishments, and receive eight per cent. as above; but they shall be bound to receive back their principal, when all private shareholders shall have been paid off.

"'The same regulations applied to the guardians of the estates of minors, the committee of lunatics, and the treasurers of municipal and other corporations.

"'Persons wishing to leave monies at the *Mont de Piété* for safe keeping, shall receive transferable tokens of credit, and such interest as may be agreed upon between the owners and the governors of the establishment,' &c. &c.

"This institution had the effect of banishing pauperism from Bourdeaux and its neighbourhood.

". Within a few years the shares of the subscribers of the original fund (all of whom received eight per cent. per annum) were bought up by the fructification of the funds, which, pending the whole of this period, supported all the necessary charities at Bourdeaux.

"From the same fund, with the assistance of some donations, the hospital in that city, said to be the finest in Europe, has been lately completed and endowed.

"All former pawnbrokers' establishments were superseded, and the funds of the new institutions are lent on pledges, or personal security, to humble persons, but only to those of good character and industrious habits. The interest of the money paid by borrowers (deducting the expenses of management) is applied to the benefit of the community at large, in charities and public works."

Mr. Barrington goes on to comment generally upon the operations of these excellent institutions:—

"It may not be uninteresting to observe the effect of these institutions:—By them Frederick the Great reclaimed Silesia. Most of the great public buildings in Europe—hospitals, aqueducts, bridges, &c.—have been completed out of their surplus profits. In Tuscany and Bavaria their condition is most flourishing, and in the Low Countries they exist to the number of at least one hundred and sixteen. In a word, it is by the agency of such institutions that the hospitals on the continent are chiefly supported."

. . . .
. . . .

"And now, with regard to the British dominions, we shall find that these are the only countries of Europe in which lending money on pledges is allowed for private advantage exclusively, and in which the profits are not applied to some charitable or public purpose; and although various efforts have been from time to time made by the legislature to regulate the rate of interest, still it is found impossible to prevent the most dreadful excess in the charges. I admit pawnbroking to be an evil, but knowing, at the same time, that it is one which cannot be avoided, I propose (what is the next best thing to its suppression) to apply the profits of the trade to charitable and useful purposes."

He then proceeds to lay before his readers a succinct account of the several failures of the attempts made by the legislature of England to introduce the system; but this we omit, in order at once to arrive at the most interesting, and by far the most curious part of the tract—one which, as our readers will soon perceive, contains a statement of facts, nothing short of *astounding*:—

"Having stated to you the history of the lending-houses, let me add a word on the present system of pawnbroking. It cannot have escaped your observation how frequently the distress and improvidence of the poor compel them to have recourse to pawnbrokers, and that the advances they thus receive are made at a rate of interest ruinously usurious. It may be said that the rate of interest is regulated by law, as by the 26th Geo. III. c. 43, (Irish statute,) pawnbrokers are allowed to take £25 per cent. per annum, besides the allowance for duplicate tickets. This is on the supposition that the pledge is not redeemed before the expiration of a month; but the practice is otherwise, as the most distressed persons frequently redeem the pledges within the week. It is a common habit to deposit some article of apparel on the Monday morning, which is redeemed on Saturday night, to enable the individual to make a decent appearance on the Sabbath. But as the lowest charge of interest by that act (and the amendment thereof, 28th Geo. III. c. 29) is for a *month*, and as it is the habit to redeem in a *week*, the charge, including the price of the duplicate, (without calculating compound interest, or the interest on a shilling where only a *fractional* part is given, and for which interest is charged as if the entire shilling had been lent,) will amount in the cases of those in the greatest want, to £650 per cent. per annum, and for every £100 lent by the pawnbrokers in shilling loans, redeemed in the week, at compound interest, it will amount to the almost incredible sum of £45,690 7s. 0¼d.!!!!!* per cent. per annum, which is paid by the poorest and most wretched class.

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* One shilling lent and received in the week by a Pawnbroker, pays the same as if for a month, viz. :—

	per Week.			per Month.			per Year.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
One Shilling pays per Week ½d. interest and 1d. for Duplicate, is . .	0	0	1½	0	0	6	0	6	6
One Pound lent in shillings pays 10d. interest, and 1s. 8d. for Duplicates, is, ...	0	2	6	0	10	0	6	10	0
One Hundred Pounds lent in shillings pays £4 3s. 4d. interest, & £8 6s. 8d. Duplicates, is	12	10	0	50	0	0	650	0	0

CALCULATION OF £100, LENT AS ABOVE, FOR FIFTY-TWO WEEKS, VIZ.:

Weeks.	Principal in hand each week, viz. :—			Makes Interest, &c., Receivable.			Weeks.	Principal in hand each week, viz. :—			Makes Interest, &c., Receivable.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1	100	0	0	12	10	0	27	2137	15	11¼	267	4	5¾
2	112	10	0	14	1	3	28	2405	0	5	300	12	6½
3	126	11	3	15	16	4¾	29	2705	12	11½	338	4	1½
4	142	7	7¾	17	15	11½	30	3043	17	1	380	9	7½
5	160	3	7¼	20	0	5¼	31	3424	6	8½	428	0	10
6	180	4	1½	22	10	6	32	3852	7	6½	481	10	11¼
7	202	14	7½	25	6	9¾	33	4333	18	5¾	541	14	9¼
8	228	1	5¼	28	10	2¼	34	4875	13	3¼	609	9	1¾
9	256	11	7½	32	1	5½	35	5485	2	5	685	12	9¼
10	288	13	1	36	1	7½	36	6170	15	2½	771	6	10¾
11	324	14	8½	40	11	10	37	6942	2	1¼	867	15	8
12	365	6	0½	45	13	3¾	38	7809	17	4¼	976	4	8
13	410	19	10¼	51	7	5¾	39	8786	2	0¼	1098	5	3
14	462	7	4	57	15	11	40	9884	7	3¼	1235	10	10¾
15	520	3	3	65	0	4¾	41	11119	18	2	1389	19	9¼
16	585	3	7¾	73	2	11½	42	12509	17	11	1563	14	8¾
17	658	6	7¼	82	5	9¾	43	14073	12	8	1759	4	1
18	740	12	5	92	11	6½	44	15832	16	9	1979	2	1
19	833	3	11¼	104	2	11¾	45	17811	18	10	2226	9	10¼
20	937	6	11¼	117	8	4¼	46	20038	8	8	2504	16	1
21	1054	10	3½	131	16	3¼	47	22553	4	9¼	2817	18	1
22	1186	6	6	148	5	9¾	48	25361	2	10¼	3170	2	10¼
23	1334	12	4¾	166	16	6¼	49	28531	5	8½	3566	8	2½
24	1501	8	11	187	13	6¾	50	32097	13	11	4013	4	2¾
25	1689	2	5¾	211	2	9¾	51	36109	18	1¾	4513	14	9¼
26	1900	5	3½	237	10	7¾	52	40613	12	11	5076	14	1¼

☞ Thus, One Hundred Pounds lent in *Shillings* and received Weekly, would, at compound interest, in one year, amount to the sum of £45,690 7s. 0¼d.

"Here it will not be irrelevant to look to the state of the charities in Ireland, and their means of support, with a view to the establishment of charitable loan or pawn-offices throughout the country.

"There is no record kept of the number of medical charities in Ireland; but I find from Surgeon Phelan's excellent book on the subject, and from other sources, that they may be thus enumerated:—

Dublin Hospitals, (exclusive of several lying-in hospitals and opthalmic institutions lately established)	7
County and other infirmaries* .	38
Fever hospitals, including three in Dublin	64
Dispensaries	528
District lunatic asylums, including the Cork asylum . . .	11
Total . .	648

"The annual expenditure may thus be estimated:—

Dublin hospitals . . .	£28.701
County and other infirmaries	26,426
Fever hospitals	13.607
Dispensaries . . .	60.000
District lunatic asylums .	22,965
To this may be added, for the medical business of workhouses, and lunatic asylums connected with them .	10,000
Total . .	£161,699

I do not include the institutions *entirely* supported by subscriptions, as some lying-in and opthalmic institutions, for which may be added £14,000.

"The sources from which this expenditure is supplied are:—

Government grants to county and city infirmaries .	£2,653
Parliamentary grants to Dublin hospitals . . .	14.374
County presentments . .	82.839
Subscriptions and donations	39,078
Petit sessions and other fines	1,742
Produce of property belonging to several hospitals† .	23,225
Total . .	£163,911

"I have endeavoured to ascertain the number of pawnbrokers in Ireland, and allowing their profits to average £900 a-year each, (which I am informed by persons in that trade to be a moderate calculation, as in the large cities great fortunes are realised,) and averaging the number from the books of the Marshal of Dublin, where the returns are required by law to be made, and on the calculation of those not returned, and those who have several offices, the lowest number may be calculated at 700 pawnbrokers, which, at £900 each, is . . £630,000

Deduct present expenses of all the charitable establishments of Ireland — hospitals, infirmaries, poor-houses, dispensaries, lunatic asylums, &c. . . 163,911

£467,911

Leaves a surplus of near half a million, which may be applied in extending the benefits of these useful institutions, and establishing convalescent hospitals, besides saving to the public a large annual grant, to the counties and towns a heavy tax, and relieving from the unequal burthen of their subscriptions the charitable persons by whom (though not always the most wealthy) those establishments are at present chiefly supported.

"But if to this surplus be added the amount of all fines, penalties, forfeited recognizances, &c. which are now almost unproductive in this country, (and which, on the continent, are applied to the support of the poor,) the amount, if properly collected, may fairly be estimated at £32.089, making the whole £500,000. After supporting, as is seen, all the medical charities, this sum would go far in preventing the necessity of poor laws, by supporting the aged and infirm, and affording employment to a large portion of the labouring population of the country.

"Such an institution, the permanent utility of which has been experienced on the Continent, is proposed to be founded in this city, under the guidance and direction of the governors of 'Barrington's hospital,' to be called the 'Charitable Loan-Bank,' and the necessary buildings for which have been already prepared.

"It is further proposed that the required capital shall be raised by debentures, varying in amount from five to one hundred pounds each, bearing interest at six per cent.

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* In the "Meath Hospital and County of Dublin Infirmary," and in "Barrington's Hospital and City of Limerick Infirmary," the Surgeons and Physicians act gratuitously, and the government grant is applied to the general support of these Institutions. In all other county and city infirmaries the grant is paid to the surgeons.

† The capital now in government security under the management of the commissioners of charitable bequests, exceeds 106,000.

"That the profits of the establishment shall, in the first instance, (after defraying the expenses) be applied in paying the interest of the capital lent, and the surplus profits to be divided in equal shares, *one* in paying off the debentures, and the *other*, (and when the debentures are paid, the *whole*,) in the maintenance and extending the benefits of the hospital, the funds of which would be thus so much increased, that the governors could enlarge the sphere of its utility, not only in giving relief and comfort to the sick and indigent, but in assisting them after their recovery or during their convalescence. It cannot have escaped the observation of those who attend a public hospital, that there occur many circumstances of distress to be relieved, besides the cause for which patients are admitted. Many persons are obliged to relinquish their trades, having consumed what they possessed in the hope of relief, and run into difficulties from which they are unable to extricate themselves; and how frequently does it happen that they are unavoidably dismissed from the hospital in a weak and infirm state, to return (perhaps to a large and wretched family) without the means of support, or strength to seek employment, and often without a home; and thus frequently causing a relapse, or establishing a diseased and weak constitution. No small proportion of our commonest, and eventually most fatal diseases, are caused by the insufficient nutriment of convalescents. Dropsies, scrofulous diseases, and scurvy, are all imputable to the same pre-disposing cause. The benefits which may be insured, by more wholesome diet of the sick and convalescent are incalculable.

"These are not speculative refinements, but truths drawn from experience and reality, and it is obvious that they must be felt with accumulated severity by such as have families dependent on them for support. Is not then the power of affording relief to such objects most desirable.

"By the means proposed, benevolent persons will assist in a work of charity, without any injury to themselves, as the rate of interest is greater than they could receive in the public funds; the profits of such an establishment will ensure ample security, and being merely lenders of the sums for which they take debentures, they incur no responsibility, nor have they any share in an establishment conducted under the direction of the governors of the hospital, who are a corporate body, and not individually responsible. Tradesmen and other persons may take debentures of even five pounds, and receive nearly double the amount of interest now received in the Savings' Bank, and be at all times enabled to raise money on such debentures, as they will be received as pledges, and money lent thereon.

"The advantages of this establishment will be:—

"1st. The raising a capital by small debentures at a certain interest, and lending it on a greater interest, and applying the profits to the purposes of charity.

"2ndly. Receiving the debentures in pawn, thus giving to the depositors an advantage which they do not possess in the savings' bank.

"3dly. Lending money at interest to poor persons of unimpeachable character and industrious habits, on personal security, as is done by the loan-banks.

"4thly. Lending money on goods, as is now done by the ordinary pawnbrokers,

"5thly. In case of deserving objects, to restore the article, such as implements of trade pawned in the hour of *real* want, without interest or charge.

"6thly. Using every precaution against receiving stolen goods in pawn."

We subjoin the following general report:—

MONT DE PIETÉ, LIMERICK, OPENED MARCH 17, 1837.

General Report, May 31, 1838, *from the commencement*, 1837, *March* 17*th*.

PAWN ACCOUNT. CASH ACCOUNT.

DATE.	Pledges in Store.	Total Received Pledges.	Pledges Grand Total.	Pledges Released.	Pledges Remain.	On Pawns.			Lent this Day.			TOTAL.			Released.			Profit by Interest.			Remaining.		
	1838.			Total.	Gr. Total.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brought forward from Dec. 1837.		77,179		58,804	18,375				14,130	1	6½				9,668	11	10¾	335	2	7½	4,461	9	7¾
1838—January...	18,375	6,755	25,130	5,432	19,698	4,461	9	7¾	1,159	2	0	5,620	11	4¾	951	14	3½	50	7	0¾	4,668	17	4½
February..	19,698	6,157	25,855	5,965	19,890	4,668	17	4¼	1,017	0	11¼	5,685	18	3	998	2	0½	53	11	6¾	4,687	16	3
March......	19,890	7,431	27,321	7,405	19,916	4,687	16	3	1,380	7	5	6,068	3	8	1,317	5	0	83	0	10½	4,750	18	7¾
April......	19,916	8,856	28,772	7,887	20,885	4,750	18	7¾	1,645	15	11	6,396	14	6¾	1,367	6	6	93	18	9	5,029	8	0¾
May 31...	20,885	10,317	31,202	8,796	22,406	5,029	8	0¾	1,897	16	4½	6,927	4	5¼	1,577	0	6½	120	9	4	5,350	3	10¾

Total Number of Pledges received from 13th March '37, to May '38, inclusive, } 116,625
Total Released,............... 94,289

Total Remaining in Store, 22,406

Number of Pledges Released } 94,289

Lent on Pawns, £21,230 4 2¼

Received for Pawns released } £15,880 0 3½

£736 10 2½ } PROFIT, May 31st, 1838.

Capital employed, 31st May, 1838............£5,350 3 10¾
Deduct do. December 31st, 1837.................. 4,461 9 7¾

Increase of Capital in Five Months......£888 14 3

Deduct Profit, 1837, December 31st, (as above)............... 335 2 7½

In Five Months, increased Profit...............................£401 7 7

Very seldom more than £5 have been borrowed on pledge; only 112 persons have borrowed even that sum. The great majority of borrowers have been under 10s.

"Thus, it appears, that the considerable sum of 1736*l.* 10s. 2½d. has been actually realised by this infant institution, out of a capital which only now has reached to the amount of 15,350*l.* 3s. 10¾d. being gradually subscribed by the gentry, or deposited by humble persons, as the occasion required, for the laudable purpose of accommodating the industrious classes at half the expense to which they have heretofore been accustomed."

We cannot conclude this brief and inadequate notice, without offering the tribute of our cordial admiration and respect to that true and exalted patriotism which neither dissolves in tears nor evaporates in sighs, but seeks, by acts of practical and singularly judicious benevolence, to *remove* the ills and sufferings which it deplores. It were faint praise to say that Mr. Barrington has conferred upon his *native city* a great and a lasting benefit: he has done more—he has planted there the germ of a system which, sooner or later, *must* extend itself over the whole of *Ireland*—making the necessities of the poor subservient to their relief, and diffusing blessings wherever it appears. As Mr. Barrington deserves all praise, he merits all confidence. He is no romantic patriot—he desires to relieve the miseries of his countrymen before he declaims upon their abstract theoretic political rights; he labours for the recovery of his country—her true, independent, trustworthy friend—and, unlike the venal empyric who lives by her diseases, he claims no other reward than the success of his plans of benevolence, and the approval of an honest heart.

AN ADVENTURE OF HARDRESS FITZGERALD, A ROYALIST CAPTAIN;

BEING AN ELEVENTH EXTRACT FROM THE LEGACY OF THE LATE FRANCIS PURCELL, P.P. OF DRUMCOOLAGH.

THE following brief narrative contains a faithful account of one of the many strange incidents which chequered the life of Hardress Fitzgerald—one of the now-forgotten heroes who flourished during the most stirring, and, though the most disastrous, by no means the least glorious period of our eventful history. He was a captain of horse in the army of James, and shared the fortunes of his master, enduring privations, encountering dangers, and submitting to vicissitudes the most galling and ruinous, with a fortitude and a heroism which would, if coupled with his other virtues, have rendered the unhappy monarch whom he served, the most illustrious among unfortunate princes. I have always preferred, where I could do so with any approach to accuracy, to give such relations as the one which I am about to submit to you, in the *first person*, and in the words of the original narrator, believing that such a form of recitation not only gives freshness to the tale, but, in this particular instance, by bringing before me and steadily fixing in my mind's eye the veteran royalist who himself related the occurrence which I am about to record, furnishes an additional stimulant to my memory, and a proportional check upon my imagination. As nearly as I can recollect then, his statement was as follows:—

AFTER the fatal battle of the Boyne, I came up in disguise to Dublin, as did many in a like situation, regarding the capital as furnishing at once a good central position of observation, and as secure a lurking place as I cared to find. I would not suffer myself to believe that the cause of my royal master was so desperate as it really was, and while I lay in my lodgings, which were posited in the garret of a small dark house, standing in the lane which runs close by Audoen's Arch, I busied myself with continual projects for the raising of the country, and the recollecting of the fragments of the defeated army—plans, you will allow, sufficiently magnificent for a poor devil who dared scarce show his face abroad in the daylight. I believe, however, that I had not much reason to fear for my personal safety, for men's minds in the city were greatly occupied with public events, and private amusements and debaucheries, which were, about that time, carried to an excess which our country never knew before, by reason of the raking together from all quarters of the empire, and indeed from most parts of Holland, the most dissolute and desperate adventurers who cared to play at hazard for their lives; and thus there seemed to be but little scrutiny into the characters of those who sought concealment.

I heard much at different times of the intentions of King James and his party, but nothing with certainty. Some said that the king still lay in Ireland; others, that he had crossed over to Scotland, to encourage the Highlanders, who, with Dundee at their head, had been stirring in his behoof; others, again, said that he had taken ship for France, leaving his followers to shift for themselves, and regarding his kingdom as wholly lost, which last was the true version, as I afterwards learned. Although I had been very active in the wars in Ireland, and had done many deeds of necessary, but dire severity, which have often since troubled me much to think upon, yet, I doubted not but that I might easily obtain protection for my person and property from the Prince of Orange, if I sought it by the ordinary submissions; but besides that my conscience and my affections resisted such time-serving concessions, I was resolved in my own mind that the cause of the royalist party was by no means desperate, and I looked to keep myself unimpeded by any pledge or promise given to the usurping Dutchman, that I might freely and honourably take a share in any struggle which might yet remain to be made for the right. I therefore lay quiet, going forth from my lodgings but little, and that chiefly under cover of the dusk, and conversing hardly at all, except with those whom I well knew. I had like once to have paid dearly for relaxing this caution; for going into a tavern one evening near the Tholsel, I had the confidence to throw off my hat, and sit there with my face quite exposed, when a fellow coming in with some troopers, they fell a-boozing, and being somewhat warmed, they began to drink "confusion to popery," and the like, and to compel the peaceable persons who happened to sit there, to join them in so doing. Though I was rather hot-blooded, I was resolved to say nothing to attract notice; but, at the same time, if urged to pledge the toasts which they were compelling others to drink, to resist doing so. With the intent to withdraw myself quietly from the place, I paid my reckoning, and putting on my hat, was going into the street, when the countryman who had come in with the soldiers, called out, "stop that popish tom-cat," and running across the room, he got to the door before me, and, shutting it, placed his back against it, to prevent my going out. Though, with much difficulty, I kept an appearance of quietness, and turning to the fellow, who, from his accent, I judged to be a northern, and whose face I knew, though, to this day, I cannot say where I had seen him before, I observed very calmly—

"Sir, I came in here with no other design than to refresh myself, without offending any man. I have paid my reckoning, and now desire to go forth. If there is anything within reason that I can do to satisfy you, and to prevent trouble and delay to myself, name your terms, and if they be but fair, I will frankly comply with them."

He quickly replied :—

"You are Hardress Fitzgerald, the bloody popish captain, that hanged the twelve men at Derry."

I felt that I was in some danger, but being a strong man, and used to perils of all kinds, it was not easy to disconcert me. I looked then steadily at the fellow, and, in a voice of much confidence, I said,

"I am neither a papist, a royalist, nor a Fitzgerald, but an honester protestant, mayhap, than many who make louder professions."

"Then, drink the honest man's toast," said he, "damnation to the pope, and confusion to skulking Jemmy and his run-away crew."

"Yourself shall hear me," said I, taking the largest pewter pot that lay within my reach. "Tapster, fill this with ale; I grieve to say, I can afford nothing better."

I took the vessel of liquor in my hand, and walking up to him, I first made a bow to the troopers who sate laughing at the sprightliness of their facetious friend, and then another to himself, when saying, "G—— damn yourself and your cause," I flung the ale straight into his face, and before he had time to recover himself, I struck him with my whole force and weight with the pewter pot upon the head, so strong a blow, that he fell, for aught I know, dead upon the floor, and nothing but the handle of the vessel remained in my hand. I opened the door, but one of the dragoons drew his sabre, and ran at me to avenge his companion. With my hand I put aside the blade of the sword, narrowly escaping what he had intended for me, the point actually tearing open my vest; without allowing him time to repeat his thrust, I struck him in the face with my clenched fist so sound a blow that he rolled back into the room with the force of a tennis ball. It was well for me that the rest were half drunk, and the evening dark, for otherwise, my folly would infallibly have cost me my life. As it was, I reached my garret in safety, with a resolution to frequent taverns no more until better times.

My little patience and money were well nigh exhausted, when, after much doubt and uncertainty, and many conflicting reports, I was assured that the flower of the royalist army, under the Duke of Berwick and General Boisleau, occupied the city of Limerick, with a determination to hold that fortress against the Prince's forces, and that a French fleet of great power, and well freighted with arms, ammunition, and men was riding in the Shannon, under the walls of the town; but this last report was, like many others then circulated, untrue, there being, indeed, a promise and expectation of such assistance, but no arrival of it till too late. The army of the Prince of Orange was said to be rapidly approaching the town, in order to commence the siege. On hearing this, and being made as certain as the vagueness and unsatisfactory nature of my information, which came not from any authentic source, would permit; at least being sure of the main point, which all allowed, namely, that Limerick was held for the king, and being also naturally fond of enterprize, and impatient of idleness, I took the resolution to travel thither, and, if possible, to throw myself into the city, in order to lend what assistance I might to my former companions in arms, well knowing that any man of strong constitution and of some experience, might easily make himself useful to a garrison in their straitened situation. When I had taken this resolution, I was not long in putting it into execution, and as the first step in the matter, I turned half of the money which remained with me, in all about seventeen pounds, into small wares and merchandize, such as travelling traders use to deal in, and the rest, excepting some shillings which I carried home for my immediate expenses, I sewed carefully in the lining of my breeches waistband, hoping that the sale of my commodities might easily supply me with subsistence upon the road. I left Dublin upon a Friday morning in the month of September, with a tolerably heavy pack upon my back. I was a strong man and a good walker, and one day with another travelled easily at the rate of twenty miles in each day, much time being lost in the towns of any note on the way, where, to avoid suspicion, I was obliged to make some stay, as if to sell my wares. I did not travel directly to Limerick, but turned far into Tipperary, going near to the borders of Cork. Upon the sixth day after my departure from Dublin, I learned, *certainly*, from some fellows who were returning from trafficking with the soldiers, that the army of the Prince was actually encamped before Limerick, upon the south side of the Shannon ; in order, then, to enter the city without interruption, I must needs cross the river, and I was much in doubt whether to do so by boat from Kerry, which I might have easily done, into the Earl of Clare's land, and thus into the beleagured city, or to take what seemed the easier way, one, however, about which I had certain misgivings, which, by the way, afterwards turned out to be just enough ; this way was to cross the Shannon at O'Brien's Bridge, or at Killaloe into the county of Clare. I feared, however, that both these passes were guarded by the Prince's forces, and resolved, if such were the case, not to essay to cross, for I was not fitted to sustain a scrutiny, having about me, though pretty safely secured, my commission from King James, which, though a dangerous companion, I would not have parted from but with my life. I settled then, in my own mind, that if the bridges were guarded, I would walk as far as Portumna, where I might cross, though at a considerable sacrifice of time ; and having determined upon this course, I turned directly towards Killaloe. I reached the foot of the mountain, or rather high hill, called Keeper—which had been pointed out to me as a landmark, lying directly between me and Killaloe, in the evening, and having ascended some way, the darkness and fog overtook me. The evening was very chilly and myself weary, hungry, and much in need of sleep, so that I preferred seeking to cross the hill, though at some risk, to remaining upon it throughout the night; stumbling over rocks and sinking into bog mire, as the nature of the ground varied, I slowly and laboriously plodded on, making very little way in proportion to the toil it cost me. After half an hour's slow walking, or rather rambling, for owing to the dark, I very soon lost my direction, I at last heard the sound of running water, and with some little trouble reached the edge of a brook, which ran in the bottom of a deep gulley ; this I knew would furnish a sure guide to the low grounds, where I might promise myself that I should speedily meet with some house or cabin where I might find shelter for the night. The stream which I followed flowed at the bottom of a rough and swampy glen, very steep and making many abrupt turns, and so dark, owing more to the fog than to the want of the moon, (for though not high, I believe it had risen at the time,) that I continually fell over fragments of rock, and stumbled up to my middle into the rivulet, which I sought to follow. In this way, drenched, weary, and with my patience almost exhausted, I was toiling onward, when turning a sharp angle in the winding glen, I found myself within some twenty yards of a group of wild-looking men, gathered in various attitudes round a glowing turf fire. I was so surprised at this rencontre, that I stopped short, and for a time was in doubt whether to turn back or to accost them. A minute's thought satisfied me that I ought to make up to the fellows, and trust to their good faith for whatever assistance they could give me. I determined then to do this, having great faith in the impulses of my mind, which, whenever I have been in jeopardy, as in my life I often have, always prompted me aright. The strong red light of the fire showed me plainly enough that the group consisted not of soldiers, but of Irish kernes, or countrymen, most of them wrapped in heavy mantles, and with no other covering for their heads than that afforded by their long, rough hair. There was nothing about them which I could see, to intimate whether their object were peaceful or warlike, but I afterwards found that they had weapons enough, though of their own rude fashion. There were in all about twenty persons assembled around the fire, some sitting upon such blocks of stone as happened to lie in the way, others stretched at their length on the ground. "God save you, boys," said I, advancing towards the party. The men who had been talking and laughing together, instantly paused, and two of them—tall and powerful fellows—snatched up each a weapon, something like a short halberd with a massive iron head, an instrument which they called among themselves a *rapp*, and with two or three long strides they came up with me, and laying hold upon my arms drew me, not, you may easily believe, making much resistance, towards the fire. When I reached the place where the figures were seated, the two men still held me firmly, and some others threw some handfuls of dry fuel upon the red embers, which blazing up, cast a strong light upon me. When they had satisfied themselves as to my appearance, they began to question me very closely as to my purpose in being upon the hill at such an unseasonable hour, asking me, what was my occupation, where I had been, and whither I was going? These questions were put to me in English by an old half-military looking man, who translated into that language the suggestions which his companions for the most part threw out in Irish. I did not choose to commit myself to these fellows, by telling them my real character and purpose, and therefore I represented myself as a poor travelling chapman, who had been at Cork, and was seeking his way to Killaloe, in order to cross over into Clare and thence to the city of Galway. My account did not seem fully to satisfy the men. I heard one fellow say in Irish, which language I understood, "may be he is a spy;" they then whispered together for a time, and the little man, who was their spokesman, came over to me and said, "do you know what we do with spies—we knock their brains out, my friend." He then turned back to them with whom he had been whispering, and talked in a low tone again with them for a considerable time. I now felt very uncomfortable, not knowing what these savages, for they appeared nothing better, might design against me. Twice or thrice I had serious thoughts of breaking from them, but the two guards who were placed upon me, held me fast by the arms, and even had I succeeded in shaking them off, I should soon have been overtaken, encumbered as I was with a heavy pack, and wholly ignorant of the lye of the ground, or else, if I were so exceedingly lucky as to escape out of *their* hands, I still had the chance of falling into those of some other party of the same kind. I therefore patiently awaited the issue of their deliberations, which, I made no doubt, affected me nearly. I turned to the men who held me, and one after the other asked them, in their own language, "why they held me?" adding, "I am but a poor pedlar, as you see. I have neither money nor money's worth, for the sake of which you should do me hurt; you may have my pack, and all that it contains, if you desire it—but do not injure me." To all this they gave no answer, but savagely desired me to hold my tongue. I accordingly remained silent, determined if the worst came, to declare to the whole party, who, I doubted not, were friendly, as were all the Irish peasantry in the south, to the Royal cause, my real character and design; and if this avowal failed me, I was resolved to make a desperate effort to escape, or at least to give my life at the dearest price I could. I was not kept long in suspense, for the little veteran who had spoken to me at first, came over, and desiring the two men to bring me after him, led the way along a broken path, which wound by the side of the steep glen. I was obliged willy nilly to go with them, and half-dragging, and half-carrying me, they brought me by the path, which now became very steep, for some hundred yards without stopping, when, suddenly coming to a stand, I found myself close before the door of some house or hut, I could not see which, through the planks of which a strong light was streaming. At this door my conductor stopped, and tapping gently at it, it was opened by a stout fellow, with buffcoat and jackboots, and pistols stuck in his belt, as also a long cavalry sword by his side.

He spoke with my guide, and to my no small satisfaction, in *French*, which convinced me that he was one of the soldiers whom Louis had sent to support our king, and who were said to have arrived in Limerick, though, as I observed above, not with truth. I was much assured by this circumstance, and made no doubt but that I had fallen in with one of those marauding parties of native Irish, who, placing themselves under the guidance of men of courage and experience, had done much brave and essential service to the cause of the king. The soldier entered an inner-door in the apartment, which opening disclosed a rude, dreary, and dilapidated room, with a low plank ceiling, much discoloured by the smoke which hung suspended in heavy masses, descending within a few feet of the ground, and completely obscuring the upper regions of the chamber. A large fire of turf and heath was burning under a kind of rude chimney, shaped like a large funnel, but by no means discharging the functions for which it was intended. Into this inauspicious apartment was I conducted by my strange companions. In the next room I heard voices employed, as it seemed, in brief questioning and answer, and in a minute the soldier re-entered the room, and having said, " votre prissonier—le General veut le voir," he led the way into the inner room, which in point of comfort and cleanliness was not a whit better than the first. Seated at a clumsy plank table placed about the middle of the floor, was a powerfully built man, of almost colossal stature—his military accoutrements, cuirass and rich regimental clothes, soiled, deranged, and spattered with recent hard travel, the flowing wig, surmounted by the cocked hat and plume, still rested upon his head—on the table lay his sword belt with its appendage, and a pair of long holster pistols, some papers, and pen and ink, also, a stone jug, and the fragments of a hasty meal; his attitude betokened the languor of fatigue; his left hand was buried beyond the lace ruffle in the breast of his cassock, and the elbow of his right rested upon the table, so as to support his head; from his mouth protruded a tobacco pipe, which as I entered he slowly withdrew, A single glance at the honest, good-humoured, comely face of the soldier, satisfied me of his identity, and removing my hat from my head I said, " God save General Sarsefield ;" the General nodded. " I am a prisoner here under strange circumstances," I continued. " I appear before you in a strange disguise; you do not recognise Captain Hardress Fitz-Gerald." " Eh, how's this," said he, approaching me with the light. " I am that Hardress Fitz-Gerald," I repeated, " who served under you at the Boyne, and upon the day of the action had the honour to protect *your* person at the expense of his own ;" at the same time I turned aside the hair which covered the scar, which you well know upon my forehead, then much more remarkable than it is now. The General on seeing this, at once recognised me, and embracing me cordially, made me sit down, and while I unstrapped my pack, a tedious job, my fingers being nearly numbed with cold, sent the men forth to procure me some provision. The General's horse was stabled in a corner of the chamber where we sate, and his war-saddle lay upon the floor; at the far end of the room was a second door, which lay half open—a bogwood fire burned on a hearth somewhat less rude than the one which I had first seen, but still very little better appointed with a chimney, for thick wreaths of smoke were eddying with every fitful gust, about the room. Close by the fire was strewed a bed of heath, intended I supposed, for the stalwart limbs of the General. " Hardress Fitzgerald," said he, fixing his eyes gravely upon me, while he slowly removed the tobacco pipe from his mouth, " I remember you, strong, bold and cunning in your warlike trade, the more desperate an enterprize, the more ready for it, you—I would gladly engage *you*, for I know you trustworthy, to perform a piece of duty, requiring it may be, no extraordinary quality to fulfil, and yet perhaps, as accidents may happen, demanding every attribute of daring and dexterity which belongs to you." Here he paused for some moments. I own I felt somewhat flattered by the terms in which he spoke of me, knowing him to be but little given to compliments, and not having any plan in my head, farther than the rendering what service I might to the cause of the King, caring very little as to the road in which my duty might lie, I frankly replied, " Sir, I hope if opportunity offers, I shall appear to deserve the honourable terms in which you are pleased to speak of me. In a righteous cause I fear not wounds or death; and in discharging my duty to my God and my king, I am ready for any hazard or any fate—name the service you require, and if it lies within the compass of my wit or power, I will fully and faithfully perform it—have I said enough?" "That is well, *very* well, my friend—you speak well, and manfully," replied the General, "I want you to convey to the hands of General Boisleau, now in the city of Limerick, a small written packet; there is some danger, mark me, of your falling in with some outpost or straggling party of the Prince's army. If you are taken unawares by any of the enemy you must dispose of the packet inside your person, rather than let it fall into their hands, that is, you must *eat* it; and if they go to question you with thumb screws, or the like, answer nothing; let them knock your brains out first," in illustration, I suppose of the latter alternative, he knocked the ashes out of his pipe upon the table as he uttered it. "The packet," he continued, "you shall have to-morrow morning; mean time comfort yourself with food and afterwards with sleep; you will want, mayhap, all your strength and wits on the morrow;" I applied myself, forthwith, to the homely fare which they had provided, and I confess that I never made a meal so heartily to my satisfaction.

It was a beautiful, clear, autumn morning, and the level beams of the early sun were slanting over the brown heath, which clothed the sides of the mountain, and glittering in the thousand bright drops which the melting hoar-frost had left behind it, and the white mists were lying like broad lakes in the valleys, when, with my pedlar's pack upon my back, and General Sarsefield's precious despatch in my bosom, I set forth, refreshed and courageous.

As I descended the hill, my heart expanded and my spirits rose under the influences which surrounded me—the keen, clear, bracing air of the morning, the bright, sloping sunshine, the merry songs of the small birds, and the distant sounds of awakening labour that floated up from the plains—all conspired to stir my heart within me—and more like a mad-cap boy, broken loose from school, than a man of sober years upon a mission of doubt and danger, I trod lightly on, whistling and singing alternately for very joy. As I approached the object of my early march, I fell in with a countryman, eager, as are most of his kind, for news. I gave him what little I had collected, and professing great zeal for the king, which indeed, I always cherished, I won upon his confidence so far, that he became much more communicative than the peasantry in those quarters are generally wont to be to strangers. From him I learned that there was a company of dragoons in William's service, quartered at Killaloe; but he could not tell whether the passage of the bridge was stopped by them or not; with a resolution, at all events, to make the attempt to cross, I approached the town—when I came within sight of the river I quickly perceived that it was so swollen with the recent rains, as, indeed, the countryman had told me, that the fords were wholly unpassable. I stopped then, upon a slight eminence overlooking the village, with a view to reconnoitre and to arrange my plans in case of interruption; while thus engaged, the wind blowing gently from the west, in which quarter Limerick lay, I distinctly heard the explosion of the cannon which played from and against the city, though at a distance of eleven miles at the least. I never yet heard the music that had for me half the attractions of that sullen sound, and as I noted again and again the distant thunder that proclaimed the perils, and the valour, and the faithfulness of my brethren, my heart swelled with pride and the tears rose to my eyes, and lifting up my hands to heaven, I prayed to God that I might be spared to take a part in the righteous quarrel that was there so bravely maintained. I felt, indeed, at this moment a longing, more intense than I have the power to describe, to be at once with my brave companions in arms, and so inwardly excited and stirred up, as if I had been actually within five minutes' march of the field of battle. It was now almost noon, and I had walked hard from the morning, across a difficult and broken country, so that I was a little fatigued, and in no small degree hungry. As I approached the hamlet I was glad to see in the window of a poor hovel, several large cakes of meal displayed, as if to induce purchasers to enter. I was right in regarding this exhibition as an intimation that entertainment might be procured within, for, upon entering and inquiring, I was speedily invited by the poor woman, who, it appeared kept this humble house of refreshment, to lay down my pack and seat myself by a ponderous table, upon which she promised to serve me with a dinner fit for a king—and, indeed, to my mind, she amply fulfilled her engagement, by supplying me abundantly with eggs, bacon, and wheaten cakes, which I discussed with a zeal which almost surprised myself. Having disposed of the solid part of my entertainment, I was proceeding to regale myself with a brimming measure of strong waters, when my attention was arrested by the sound of horses' hoofs in brisk motion upon the broken road, and evidently approaching the hovel in which I was at that moment seated. The ominous clank of sword scabbards and the jingle of brass accoutrements, announced, unequivocally, that the horsemen were of the military profession.

"The red coats will stop here undoubtedly," said the old woman, observing, I suppose, the anxiety of my countenance, "they never pass it without coming in for half an hour to drink or smoke; if you desire to avoid them, I can hide you safely, but dont lose a moment, they will be here before you can count a hundred."

I thanked the good woman for her hospitable zeal; but I felt a repugnance to concealing myself as she suggested, which was enhanced by the consciousness that if by any accident I were detected while lurking in the room, my situation would of itself inevitably lead to suspicions and probably to discovery. I, therefore, declined her offer, and awaited in suspense the entrance of the soldiers. I had time before they made their appearance to move my seat hurriedly from the table to the hearth, where, under the shade of the large chimney I might observe the coming visitors, with less chance of being myself remarked upon. As my hostess had anticipated, the horsemen drew up at the door of the hut, and five dragoons entered the dark chamber where I awaited them. Leaving their horses at the entrance, with much noise and chatter they proceeded to seat themselves and call for liquor. Three of these fellows were Dutchmen, and indeed all belonged, as I afterwards found, to a Dutch regiment, which had been recruited with Irish and English, as also partly officered from the same nations. Being supplied with pipes and drink they soon became merry, and not suffering their smoking to interfere with their conversation, they talked loud and quickly, for the most part in a sort of barbarous language, neither Dutch nor English, but compounded of both. They were so occupied with their own jocularity that I had very great hopes of escaping observation altogether, and remained quietly seated in a corner of the chimney, leaning back upon my seat as if asleep. My taciturnity and quiescence however, did not avail me, for one of these fellows coming over to the hearth to light his pipe, perceived me, and looking me very hard in the face, he said,

"What countryman are you brother, that you sit with a covered head in the room with the Prince's soldiers?" At the same time he tossed my hat off my head into the fire; I was not fool enough, though somewhat hot-blooded, to suffer the insolence of this fellow to involve me in a broil so dangerous to my person and ruinous to my schemes, as a riot with these soldiers must prove. I, therefore, quietly taking up my hat and shaking the ashes out of it observed,

"Sir, I crave your pardon if I have offended you; I am a stranger in these quarters, and a poor, ignorant, humble man, desiring only to drive my little trade in peace, so far as that may be done in these troublous times."

"And what may your trade be?" said the same fellow.

"I am a travelling merchant," I replied, "and sell my wares as cheap as any trader in the country."

"Let us see them forthwith," said he, "mayhap I or my comrades may want something which you can supply, where is thy chest friend? thou shalt have ready money," (winking at his companions) "ready money, and good weight, and sound metal, none of your rascally pinchbeck. Eh, my lads? Bring forth the goods and let us see."

Thus urged, I should have betrayed myself had I hesitated to do as required, and anxious, upon any terms, to quiet these turbulent men of war, I unbuckled my pack and exhibited its contents upon the table before them.

"A pair of lace ruffles, by the Lord," said one, unceremoniously seizing upon the articles he named.

"A phial of perfume," continued another, tumbling over the farrago which I had submitted to them; "washballs, combs, stationery, slippers, small knives, tobacco, by ——; this merchant is a prize, mark me, honest fellow, the man who wrongs thee shall suffer, fore Gad he shall, thou shalt be fairly dealt with," (this he said while in the act of pocketing a small silver tobacco-box, the most valuable article in the lot,) "you shall come with me to head quarters, the captain will deal with you, and never haggle about the price, I promise thee his good will, and thou wilt consider me accordingly—you'll find him a profitable customer, he has money without end, and throws it about like a gentleman—if so be as I tell thee I shall expect, and my comrades here, a piece or two in the way of a compliment—but of this anon—come then with us, buckle on thy pack, quickly friend."

There was no use in my declaring my willingness to deal with themselves in preference to their master, it was clear that they had resolved that I should, in the most expeditious and advantageous way, turn my goods into money, that they might excise upon me to the amount of their wishes. The worthy who had taken a lead in these arrangements, and who, by his stripes, I perceived to be a corporal, having insisted on my taking a dram with him to cement our newly formed friendship, for which, however, he requested me to pay, made me mount behind one of his comrades, and the party, of which I thus formed an unwilling member, moved at a slow trot towards the quarters of the troop. They reined up their horses at the head of the long bridge, which at this village spans the broad waters of the Shannon, connecting the opposite counties of Tipperary and Clare. A small tower built originally, no doubt, to protect and to defend this pass, occupied the near extremity of the bridge, and in its rere, but connected with it, stood several straggling buildings rather dilapidated. A dismounted trooper kept guard at the door, and my conductor having dismounted, as also the corporal, the latter inquired,

"Is the captain in his quarters?"

"He is," replied the sentinel.

And without more ado my companion shoved me into the entrance of the small dark tower, and opening a door at the extremity of the narrow chamber into which we had passed from the street, we entered a second room in which were seated some half dozen officers of various ranks and ages engaged in drinking, and smoking, and play; I glanced rapidly from man to man, and was nearly satisfied by my inspection, when one of the gentlemen whose back had been turned towards the place where I stood, suddenly changed his position and looked towards me; as soon as I saw his face, my heart sunk within me, and I knew that my life or death was balanced, as it were, upon a razor's edge—the name of this man whose unexpected appearance thus affected me was Hugh Oliver, and good and strong reason had I to dread him; for so bitterly did he hate me, that to this moment, I do verily believe he would have compassed my death if it lay in his power to do so, even at the hazard of his own life and soul; for I had been, though God knows, with many sore strugglings and at the stern call of public duty, the judge and condemner of his brother, and though the military law, which I was called upon to administer, would permit no other course or sentence than the bloody one which I was compelled to pursue, yet even to this hour the recollection of that deed is heavy at my breast. As soon as I saw this man I felt that my safety depended upon the accident of his not recognising me through the disguise which I had assumed, an accident against which were many chances, for he well knew my person and appearance.

It was too late, now, to destroy General Sarsfield's instructions, any attempt to do so would ensure detection; all then depended upon a cast of the die. When the first moment of dismay and heart-sickening agitation had passed, it seemed to me as if my mind acquired a collectedness and clearness more complete and intense than I had ever experienced before. I instantly perceived that he did not know me, for turning from me to the soldier with an air of indifference, he said—

"Is this a prisoner or a deserter? What have you brought him here for, sirra?"

"Your wisdom will regard him as you see fit, may it please you," said the corporal. "The man is a travelling merchant, and, overtaking him upon the road, close by old Dame MacDonagh's cot, I thought I might as well make a sort of prisoner of him, that your honour might use him as might appear most convenient; he has many commodities which are not unworthy of price in this wilderness, and some which you may condescend to make use of yourself. May he exhibit the goods he has for sale, a'nt please you?"

"Ay, let us see them," said he.

"Unbuckle your pack," exclaimed the corporal, with the same tone of command with which, at the head of his guard, he would have said "recover your arms"—"unbuckle your pack, fellow, and show your goods to the captain—here where you are."

The conclusion of his directions was suggested by my endeavouring to move round in order to get my back towards the windows, hoping by keeping my face in the shade, to escape detection. In this manœuvre, however, I was foiled by the imperiousness of the soldier, and inwardly cursing his ill-timed interference, I proceeded to present my merchandise to the loving contemplation of the officers, who thronged around me, with a strong light from an opposite window full upon my face.

As I continued to traffic with these gentlemen, I observed with no small anxiety the eyes of Captain Oliver frequently fixed upon me with a kind of dubious inquiring gaze.

"I think my honest fellow," he said at last, "that I have seen you somewhere before this. Have you often dealt with the military?"

"I have traded, sir," said I, "with the soldiery many a time, and always been honourably treated. Will your worship please to buy a pair of lace ruffles?—very cheap, your worship."

"Why do you wear your hair so much over your face, sir?" said Oliver, without noticing my suggestion. "I promise you, I think no good of thee; throw back your hair, and let me see thee plainly. Hold up your face, and look straight at me; throw back your hair, sir."

I felt that all chance of escape was at an end; and stepping forward as near as the table would allow me to him, I raised my head, threw back my hair, and fixed my eyes sternly and boldly upon his face. I saw that he knew me instantly, for his countenance turned as pale as ashes with surprise and hatred; he started up, placing his hand instinctively upon his sword hilt, and glaring at me with a look so deadly, that I thought every moment he would strike his sword into my heart. He said in a kind of whisper, "Hardress Fitzgerald?"

"Yes," said I boldly, for the excitement of the scene had effectually stirred my blood, "Hardress Fitzgerald is before you. I know you well, Captain Oliver. I know how you hate me. I know how you thirst for my blood; but in a good cause, and in the hands of God, I defy you."

"You are a desperate villain, sir," said Captain Oliver; "a rebel and a murderer. Hollo, there, guard, seize him."

As the soldiers entered I threw my eyes hastily round the room, and observing a glowing fire upon the hearth, I suddenly drew General Sarsefield's packet from my bosom, and casting it upon the embers, planted my foot upon it.

"Secure the papers," shouted the Captain, and almost instantly I was laid prostrate and senseless upon the floor, by a blow from the butt of a carbine.

I cannot say how long I continued in a state of torpor; but at length, having slowly recovered my senses, I found myself lying firmly handcuffed upon the floor of a small chamber, through a narrow loop-hole in one of whose walls the evening sun was shining. I was chilled with cold and damp, and drenched in blood, which had flowed in large quantities from the wound on my head. By a strong effort I shook off the sick drowsiness which still hung upon me, and weak and giddy I rose with pain and difficulty to my feet. The chamber or rather cell in which I stood, was about eight feet square, and of a height very disproportioned to its other dimensions—its altitude from the floor to the ceiling being not less than twelve or fourteen feet. A narrow slit placed high in the wall admitted a scanty light, but sufficient to assure me that my prison contained nothing to render the sojourn of its tenant a whit less comfortless than my worst enemy could have wished. My first impulse was naturally to examine the security of the door—the loophole which I have mentioned being too high and too narrow to afford a chance of escape. I listened attentively to ascertain if possible, whether or not a guard had been placed upon the outside. Not a sound was to be heard. I now placed my shoulder to the door, and sought with all my combined strength and weight to force it open; it, however, resisted all my efforts, and thus baffled in my appeal to mere animal power, exhausted and disheartened, I threw myself on the ground. It was not in my nature, however, long to submit to the apathy of despair, and in a few minutes I was on my feet again. With patient scrutiny I endeavoured to ascertain the nature of the fastenings which secured the door. The plank fortunately having been nailed together fresh, had shrunk considerably, so as to leave wide chinks between each and its neighbour. By means of these apertures, I saw that my dungeon was secured, not by a lock, as I had feared, but by a strong wooden bar, running horizontally across the door, about midway upon the outside.

"Now," thought I, "if I can but slip my fingers through the opening of the planks, I can easily remove the bar, and then——"

My attempts, however, were all frustrated by the manner in which my hands were fastened together, each embarrassing the other, and rendering my efforts so hopelessly clumsy, that I was obliged to give them over in despair. I turned with a sigh from my last hope, and began to pace my narrow prison floor, when my eye suddenly encountered an old rusty nail or holdfast sticking in the wall. All the gold of Plutus would not have been so welcome as that rusty piece of iron. I instantly wrung it from the wall, and inserting the point between the planks of the door into the bolt, and working it backwards and forwards, I had at length the unspeakable satisfaction to perceive that the beam was actually yielding to my efforts, and gradually sliding into its berth in the wall. I have often been engaged in struggles where great bodily strength was required and every thew and sinew in the system taxed to the uttermost, but, strange as it may appear, I never was so completely exhausted and overcome by any labour as by this comparatively trifling task. Again and again was I obliged to desist, until my cramped finger joints recovered their power; but, at length my perseverance was rewarded, for, little by little, I succeeded in removing the bolt, so far as to allow the door to open sufficiently to permit me to pass. With some squeezing I succeeded in forcing my way into a small passage, upon which my prison door opened. This led into a chamber, somewhat more spacious than my cell, but still containing no furniture, and affording no means of escape to one so crippled with bonds as I was. At the far extremity of this room was a door which stood ajar, and, stealthily passing through it, I found myself in a room, containing nothing but a few raw hides, which rendered the atmosphere nearly intolerable. Here I checked myself, for I heard voices in busy conversation in the next room. I stole softly to the door which separated the chamber in which I stood from that from which the voices proceeded. A moment served to convince me that any attempt upon it would be worse than fruitless, for it was secured upon the outside by a strong lock, besides two bars, all which I was enabled to ascertain by means of the same defect in the joining of the planks, which I have mentioned as belonging to the inner door. I had approached this door very softly, so that my proximity being wholly unsuspected by the speakers within, the conversation continued without interruption. Planting myself close to the door, I applied my eye to one of the chinks which separated the boards, and thus obtained a full view of the chamber and its occupants. It was the very apartment into which I had been first conducted; the outer door which faced the one at which I stood, was closed, and at a small table were seated the only tenants of the room,—two officers, one of whom was Captain Oliver; the latter was reading a paper which, I made no doubt, was the document with which I had been entrusted.

"The fellow deserves it, no doubt," said the junior officer. "But, methinks, considering our orders from head-quarters, you deal somewhat too hastily."

"Nephew, nephew," said Captain Oliver, "you mistake the tenor of our orders. We were directed to conciliate the peasantry by fair and gentle treatment, but not to suffer spies and traitors to escape. This packet is of some value, though not, in all its parts, intelligible to me. The bearer has made his way hither under a disguise, which, along with the other circumstances of his appearance here, is sufficient to convict him as a spy."

There was a pause here, and after a few minutes the younger officer said :

"Spy is a hard term, no doubt, uncle ; but it is possible, nay, likely, that this poor devil sought merely to carry the parcel, with which he was charged, in safety to its destination. Pshaw! he is sufficiently punished if you duck him, for ten minutes or so, between the bridge and the mill-dam."

"Young man," said Oliver, somewhat sternly, "do not obtrude your advice where it is not called for,—this man, for whom you plead, murdered your own father."

I could not see how this announcement affected the person to whom it was addressed, for his back was towards me ; but I conjectured, easily, that my last poor chance was gone, for a long silence ensued. Captain Oliver at length resumed :

"I know the villain well ; I know him capable of any crime ; but, by —— his last card is played, and the game is up :—he shall not see the moon rise to-night."

There was here another pause ;—Oliver rose, and, going to the outer door, called :

"Hewson! Hewson!"

A grim-looking corporal entered.

"Hewson, have your guard ready at eight o'clock, with their carbines clean, and a round of ball-cartridge each. Keep them sober ; and, further, plant two upright posts at the near end of the bridge, with a cross one at top, in the manner of a gibbet. See to these matters, Hewson: I shall be with you speedily."

The corporal made his salutations and retired. Oliver deliberately folded up the papers which I had been commissioned with, and placing them in the pocket of his vest, he said :

"Cunning, cunning Master Hardress Fitzgerald hath made a false step ; the old fox is in the toils. Hardress Fitzgerald, Hardress Fitzgerald, I will blot you out."

He repeated these words several times, at the same time rubbing his finger strongly upon the table, as if he sought to erase a stain :

"*I will blot you out!*"

There was a kind of glee in his manner and expression which chilled my very heart.

"You shall be first shot like a dog, and then hanged like a dog :—shot to-night, and hung to-morrow ; hung at the bridge-head : hung, until your bones drop asunder!"

It is impossible to describe the exultation with which he seemed to dwell upon, and to particularize, the fate which he intended for me. I observed, however, that his face was deadly pale, and felt assured that his conscience, and inward convictions, were struggling against his cruel resolve. Without further comment the two officers left the room—I suppose to oversee the preparations which were being made for the deed of which I was to be the victim. A chill, sick horror crept over me as they retired, and I felt, for the moment, upon the brink of swooning. This feeling, however, speedily gave place to a sensation still more terrible—a state of excitement so intense and tremendous as to border upon literal madness, supervened ; my brain reeled and throbbed as if it would burst; thoughts the wildest and the most hideous flashed through my mind with a spontaneous rapidity that scared my very soul ; while, all the time, I felt a strange and frightful impulse to burst into uncontrolled laughter. Gradually this fearful paroxysm passed away. I kneeled and prayed fervently, and felt comforted and assured ; but still I could not view the slow approaches of certain death without an agitation little short of agony.

I have stood in battle many a time, when the chances of escape were fearfully small. I have confronted foemen in the deadly breach. I have marched, with a constant heart, against the cannon's mouth. Again and again has the beast which I bestrode been shot under me ; again and again have I seen the comrades who walked beside me in an instant laid for ever in the dust. Again and again have I been in the thick of battle, and of its mortal dangers, and never felt my heart to shake, or a single nerve to tremble ; but now, helpless, manacled, imprisoned, doomed, forced to watch the approaches of an inevitable fate ; to wait, silent and moveless, while death as it were *crept* towards me, human nature was taxed to the uttermost to bear the horrible situation.

I returned again to the closet in which I had found myself upon recovering from the swoon.

The evening sunshine and twilight was fast melting into darkness, when I heard the outer door, that which communicated with the guard-room in which the officers had been amusing themselves, opened and locked again upon the inside. A measured step then approached, and the door of the wretched cell in which I lay being rudely pushed open, a soldier entered, who carried something in his hand, but, owing to the obscurity of the place, I could not see what.

"Art thou awake, fellow?" said he, in a gruff voice. "Stir thyself; get upon thy legs."

His orders were enforced by no very gentle application of his military boot.

"Friend," said I, rising with difficulty, "you need not insult a dying man. You have been sent hither to conduct me to death. Lead on! My trust is in God, that he will forgive me my sins, and receive my soul, redeemed by the blood of his Son."

There here intervened a pause of some length, at the end of which the soldier said, in the same gruff voice, but in a lower key:

"Look ye, comrade, it will be your own fault if you die this night. On one condition I promise to get you out of this hobble with a whole skin; but, if you go to any of your d——d gammon, by G—, before two hours are passed, you will have as many holes in your carcase as a target."

"Name your conditions," said I; "and if they consist with honor, I will never baulk at the offer."

"Here they are: you are to be shot to-night, by Captain Oliver's orders; the carbines are cleaned for the job, and the cartridges served out to the men. By G— I tell you the truth."

Of this I needed not much persuasion, and intimated to the man my conviction that he spoke truth.

"Well, then," he continued, "now for the means of avoiding this ugly business. Captain Oliver rides this night to head-quarters, with the papers which you carried. Before he starts he will pay you a visit, to fish what he can out of you, with all the fine promises he can make. Humour him a little, and, when you find an opportunity, stab him in the throat above the cuirass."

"A feasible plan, surely," said I, raising my shackled hands, "for a man thus completely crippled and without a weapon."

"I will manage all that presently for you," said the soldier; "when you have thus dealt with him, take his cloak and hat, and so forth, and put them on; the papers you will find in the pocket of his vest, in a red leather case; walk boldly out—I am appointed to ride with Captain Oliver, and you will find me holding his horse and my own by the door; mount quickly, and I will do the same, and then we will ride for our lives across the bridge. You will find the holster pistols loaded in case of pursuit, and with the devil's help, we shall reach Limerick without a hair hurt—my only condition is, that when you strike Oliver, you strike home, and again and again, until he is *finished*—and I trust to your honour to remember me when we reach the town."

I cannot say whether I resolved right or wrong, but I thought my situation, and the conduct of Captain Oliver, warranted me in acceding to the conditions propounded by my visitant, and with alacrity I told him so, and desired him to give me the power, as he had promised to do, of executing them. With speed and promptitude he drew a small key from his pocket, and in an instant the manacles were removed from my hands. How my heart bounded within me as my wrists were released from the iron gripe of the shackles—the first step towards freedom was made—my self-reliance returned, and I felt assured of success.

"Now for the weapon," said I.

"I fear me you will find it rather clumsy," said he, "but if well handled it will do as well as the best Toledo; it is the only thing I could get, but I sharpened it myself; it has an edge like a skean."

He placed in my hand the steel head of a halberd. Grasping it firmly, I found that it made, by no means a bad weapon in point of convenience, for it felt in the hand like a heavy dagger, the portion which formed the blade or point being crossed nearly at the lower extremity by a small bar of metal, at one side shaped into the form of an axe, and at the other into that of a hook—these two transverse appendages being muffled by the folds of my cravat, which I removed for the purpose, formed a perfect guard or hilt, and the lower extremity forn[illegible]e a tube in which the pike handl[illegible]d been inserted, afforded ample space for the grasp of my hand—the point had been made as sharp as a needle, and the metal he assured me was good. Thus equipped he left me, having observed, "the Captain sent me to bring you to your senses, and give you some water, that he might find you proper for his visit; here is the pitcher, I think I have revived you sufficiently for the Captain's purpose." With a low savage laugh he left me to my reflections. Having examined and arranged the weapon, I carefully bound the ends of the cravat with which I had secured the cross part of the spear head, firmly round my wrist, so that in case of a struggle it might not easily be forced from my hand, and having made these precautionary dispositions, I sate down upon the ground with my back against the wall, and my hands together under my coat, awaiting my visitor. The time wore slowly on; the dusk became dimmer and dimmer, until it nearly bordered on total darkness. "How's this," said I inwardly, "Captain Oliver you said I should not see the moon rise to-night; methinks you are somewhat tardy in fulfilling your prophecy." As I made this reflection, a noise at the outer door announced the entrance of a visitant. I knew that the decisive moment was come, and letting my head sink upon my breast, and assuring myself that my hands were concealed, I awaited, in the attitude of deep dejection, the approach of my foe and betrayer. As I had expected, Captain Oliver entered the room where I lay; he was equipped for instant duty, as far as the imperfect twilight would allow me to see; the long sword clanked upon the floor, as he made his way through the lobbies, which led to my place of confinement; his ample military cloak hung upon his arm—his cocked hat was upon his head, and in all points he was prepared for the road. This tallied exactly with what my strange informant had told me. I felt my heart swell and my breath come thick, as the awful moment which was to witness the death-struggle of one or other of us approached. Captain Oliver stood within a yard or two of the place where I sat, or rather lay, and folding his arms he remained silent for a minute or two, as if arranging in his mind how he should address me.

"Hardress Fitzgerald," he began at length, "are you awake? stand up if you desire to hear of matters nearly touching your life or death; get up, I say."

I arose, doggedly, and affecting the awkward movements of one whose hands were bound,

"Well," said I, "what would you of me?—is it not enough that I am thus imprisoned, without a cause, and about, as I suspect, to suffer a most unjust and violent sentence, but must I also be disturbed during the few moments left me for reflection and repentance, by the presence of my persecutor. What do you want of me?"

"As to your punishment, sir," said he, "your own deserts have, no doubt, suggested the likelihood of it to your mind; but I now am with you to let you know, that whatever mitigation of your sentence you may look for, must be earned by your compliance with my orders. You must frankly and fully explain the contents of the packet which you endeavoured this day to destroy, and farther, you must tell all that you know of the designs of the popish rebels."

"And if I do this I am to expect a mitigation of my punishment—is it not so?"

Oliver bowed.

"And what *is* this mitigation to be? On the honour of a soldier, what is it to be?" inquired I.

"When you have made the disclosure required," he replied, "you shall hear; 'tis then time to talk of indulgences."

"Methinks it would then be too late," answered I, "but a chance is a chance, and a drowning man will catch at a straw. You are an honourable man Captain Oliver; I must depend, I suppose on your good faith. Well, sir, before I make the desired communication, I have one question more to put. What is to befal me, in case that I, remembering the honour of a soldier and a gentleman, reject your infamous terms, scorn your mitigations, and defy your utmost power."

"In that case," replied he coolly, "before half an hour you shall be a corpse."

"Then, God have mercy on your soul," said I, and springing forward I dashed the weapon, which I held, at his throat. I missed my aim, but struck him full in the mouth with such force that most of his front teeth were dislodged, and the point of the spear-head passed out under his jaw, at the ear. My onset was so sudden and unexpected that he reeled back to the wall, and did not recover his equilibrium in time to prevent my dealing a second blow, which I did with my whole force; the point unfortunately struck the cuirass, near the neck, and glancing aside it inflicted but a flesh wound, tearing the skin and tendons along the throat. He now grappled with me, strange to say, without uttering any cry of alarm; being a very powerful man, and if anything, rather heavier and more strongly built than I, he succeeded in drawing me with him to the ground. We fell together, with a heavy crash, tugging and straining in what we were both conscious was a mortal struggle; at length I succeeded in getting over him, and struck him twice more in the face; still he struggled with an energy which nothing but the tremendous stake at issue could have sustained. I succeeded again in inflicting several more wounds upon him, any one of which might have been mortal. While thus contending he clutched his hands about my throat, so firmly that I felt the blood swelling the veins of my temples and face almost to bursting. Again and again I struck the weapon deep into his face and throat, but life seemed to adhere in him with an almost *insect* tenacity. My sight now nearly failed, my senses almost forsook me, I felt upon the point of suffocation when, with one desperate effort, I struck him another and a last blow in the face. The weapon which I wielded had lighted upon the eye, and the point penetrated the brain; the body quivered under me, the deadly grasp relaxed, and Oliver lay upon the ground a corpse! As I arose and shook the weapon and the bloody cloth from my hand, the moon, which he had foretold I should never see rise, shone bright and broad into the room and disclosed, with ghastly distinctness: the mangled features of the dead soldier, the mouth full of clotting blood and broken teeth lay open—the eye, close by whose lid the fatal wound had been inflicted, was not, as might have been expected, bathed in blood, but had started forth nearly from the socket, and gave to the face, by its fearful unlikeliness to the other glazing orb, a leer more hideous and unearthly than fancy ever saw; the wig, with all its rich curls, had fallen with the hat to the floor, leaving the shorn head exposed, and in many places marked by the recent struggle—the rich lace cravat was drenched in blood, and the gay uniform in many places soiled with the same. It is hard to say with what feelings I looked upon the unsightly and revolting mass which had so lately been a living and a comely man. I had not any time, however, to spare for reflection; the deed was done—the responsibility was upon me, and all was registered in the book of that God who judges rightly.

With eager haste I removed from the body such of the military accoutrements as were necessary for the purpose of my disguise. I buckled on the sword, drew off the military boots, and donned them myself, placed the brigadier wig and cocked hat upon my head, threw on the cloak, drew it up about my face, and proceeded with the papers, which I found as the soldier had foretold me, and the key of the outer lobby, to the door of the guard room; this I opened, and with a firm and rapid tread walked through the officers, who rose as I entered, and passed without question or interruption to the street door. Here I was met by the grim-looking corporal, Hewson, who, saluting me, said, "how soon, Captain, shall the file be drawn out and the prisoner despatched?"

"In half an hour," I replied, without raising my voice.

The man again saluted, and in two steps I reached the soldier who held the two horses, as he had intimated.

"Is all right?" said he eagerly.

"Ay," said I, "which horse am I to mount?"

He satisfied me upon this point, and I threw myself into the saddle; the soldier mounted his horse, and dashing the spurs into the flanks of the animal which I bestrode, we thundered along the narrow bridge. At the far extremity a sentinel, as we approached, called out, "who goes there? stand and give the word." Heedless of the interruption, with my heart bounding with excitement, I dashed on, as did also the soldier who accompanied me.

"Stand, or I fire, give the word," cried the sentry.

"God save the king, and to hell with the Prince," shouted I, flinging the cocked hat in his face as I gallopped by.

The response was the sharp report of a carbine, accompanied by the whiz of a bullet, which passed directly between me and my comrade, now riding beside me.

"Hurrah!" I shouted, "try it again my boy," and away we went at a gallop which bid fair to distance everything like pursuit. Never was spur more needed, however, for soon the clatter of horses' hoofs, in full speed, crossing the bridge, came sharp and clear through the stillness of the night. Away we went, with our pursuers close behind; one mile was passed, another nearly completed; the moon now shone forth, and turning in the saddle I looked back upon the road we had passed. One trooper had headed the rest, and was within a hundred yards of us. I saw the fellow throw himself from his horse upon the ground. I knew his object, and said to my comrade, "lower your body—lie flat over the saddle, the fellow is going to fire." I had hardly spoken when the report of a carbine startled the echoes, and the ball striking the hind leg of my companion's horse, the poor animal fell headlong upon the road, throwing his rider head-foremost over the saddle. My first impulse was to stop and share whatever fate might await my comrade; but my second and wiser one was to spur on, and save myself and my despatch. I rode on at a gallop, turning to observe my comrade's fate, I saw his pursuer, having remounted, ride rapidly up to him, and on reaching the spot where the man and horse lay, rein in and dismount. He was hardly upon the ground, when my companion shot him dead with one of the holster pistols which he had drawn from the pipe, and leaping nimbly over a ditch at the side of the road, he was soon lost among the ditches and thorn bushes which covered that part of the country. Another mile being passed I had the satisfaction to perceive that the pursuit was given over, and in an hour more I crossed Thomond bridge, and slept that night in the fortress of Limerick, having delivered the packet, the result of whose safe arrival was the destruction of William's great train of artillery, then upon its way to the besiegers.

Years after this adventure, I met in France a young officer, who I found had served in Captain Oliver's regiment, and he explained what I had never before understood—the motives of the man who had wrought my deliverance. Strange to say, he was the foster brother of Oliver, whom he thus devoted to death, but in revenge for the most grievous wrong which one man can inflict upon another!

"THE QUARE GANDER,"

BEING A TWELFTH EXTRACT FROM THE LEGACY OF THE LATE FRANCIS PURCELL, P.P. OF DROMCOOLAGH.

As I rode at a slow walk, one soft autumn evening, from the once noted and noticeable town of Emly, now a squalid village, towards the no less remarkable town of Tipperary, I fell into a meditative mood. My eye wandered over a glorious landscape; a broad sea of corn fields, that might have gladdened even a golden age, was waving before me; groups of little cabins, with their poplars, osiers, and light mountain ashes, clustered shelteringly around them, were scattered over the plain; the thin blue smoke arose floating through their boughs in the still evening air; and far away with all their broad lights and shades softened with the haze of approaching twilight, stood the bold wild Galties. As I gazed on this scene, whose richness was deepened by the melancholy glow of the setting sun, the tears rose to my eyes, and I said, "Alas my country! what a mournful beauty is thine; dressed in loveliness and laughter, there is mortal decay at thy heart,—sorrow, sin, and shame have mingled thy cup of misery; strange rulers have bruised thee, and laughed thee to scorn, and they have made all thy sweetness bitter; thy shames and sins are the austere fruits of thy miseries, and thy miseries have been poured out upon thee by foreign hands. Alas my stricken country!—clothed with this most pity moving smile, with this most unutterably mournful loveliness, thou sore grieved, thou desperately beloved,—is there for thee, my country, a resurrection?"

I know not how long I might have continued to rhapsodize in this strain, had not my wandering thoughts been suddenly recalled to my own immediate neighbourhood, by the monotonous clatter of a horse's hoofs upon the road, evidently moving, at that peculiar pace, which is neither a walk nor a trot, and yet partakes of both, so much in vogue among the southern farmers. In a moment my pursuer was up with me, and checking his steed into a walk, he saluted me with much respect; the cavalier was a light-built fellow, with good humoured sun-burnt features, a shrewd and lively black eye, and a head covered with a crop of close curly black hair, and surmounted with a turf-coloured caubeen, in the pack-thread band of which was stuck a short pipe, which had evidently seen much service. My companion was a dealer in all kinds of local lore, and soon took occasion to let me see that he was so. After two or three short stories, in which the scandalous and supernatural were happily blended, we happened to arrive at a narrow road or bohreen leading to a snug-looking farm-house.

"That's a comfortable bit iv a farm," observed my comrade, pointing towards the dwelling with his thumb, "a shnug spot, and belongs to the Mooneys this long time; 'tis a noted place for what happened wid the famous gandher there in former times."

"And what was that?" enquired I.

"What was it happened wid the gandher!" ejaculated my companion in a tone of indignant surprise, "the gandher iv Ballymacrucker, the gandher! —your raverence must be a stranger in these parts; sure every fool knows all about the gandher, and Terence Mooney, that was, rest his sowl;—by gorra, tis surprising to me how in the world you didn't hear iv the gandher; and may be it's funnin me ye are, your raverance."

I assured him to the contrary, and conjured him to narrate to me the facts an un-acquaintance with which was sufficient, it appeared to stamp me as an ignoramus of the first magnitude. It did not require much entreaty to induce my communicative friend to relate the circumstance, in nearly the following words:—

"Terence Mooney was an honest boy and well to do—an he rinted the bigest farm on this side iv the Galties, an bein' mighty cute an' a sevare worker, it was small wonder he turned a good penny every harvest; but unluckily he was blessed with an' ilegant large family iv daughters, an' iv coorse his heart was allamost bruck, strivin' to make up fortunes for the whole of them—an there wasn't a conthrivance iv any soart or discription for makin' money out iv the farm, but he was up to. Well among the other ways he had iv gettin up in the world, he always kep a power iv turkies, and all soarts iv poultrey; an' he was out iv all rason partial to geese—an small blame to him for that same—for twiste a year you can pluck them as bare as my hand—an' get a fine price for the feathers, and plenty of rale sizable eggs—an when they are too ould to lay any more, you can kill them, an' sell them to the gintlemen for gozlings, d'ye see, —let alone that a goose is the most manly bird that is out. Well it happened in the coorse iv time, that one ould gandher tuck a wondherful likin' to Terence, an divil a place he could go serenadin' about the farm, or lookin' afther the men, but the gandher id be at his heels, an' rubbin' himself agin his legs, and lookin' up in his face just like any other Christian id do; and begorra, the likes iv it was never seen, Terence Mooney an' the gandher wor so great. An at last the bird was so engagin' that Terence would not allow it to be plucked any more; an' kept it from that time out, for love an affection; just all as one like one iv his childhren. But happiness in perfection never lasts long; an the neighbours bigin'd to suspect the nathur and intentions iv the gandher; an' some iv them said it was the divil, and more iv them that it was a fairy. Well Terence could not but hear something of what was sayin', and you may be sure he was not altogether asy in his mind about it, an' from one day to another he was gettin' more ancomfortable in himself, until he determined to sind for Jer Garvan, the fairy docthor in Garryowen, an' it's he was the ilegant hand at the business, and divil a sperit id say a crass word to him, no more nor a priest; an' moreover he was very great wid ould Terence Mooney, this man's father that was. So without more about it, he was sent for; an' sure enough the divil a long he was about it, for he kem back that very evenin' along wid the boy that was sint for him; an' as soon as he was there, an' tuck his supper, an' was done talkin' for a while, he bigined of coorse to look into the gandher. Well he turned it this away an' that away, to the right, and to the left, an' straight-ways an' upside down, an' when he was tired handlin' it, says he to Terence Mooney:

"'Terence,' says he, 'you must remove the bird into the next room,' says he, 'an' put a pettycoat,' says he, 'or any other convaynience round his head,' says he.

"'An' why so?' says Terence.

"'Becase,' says Jer, says he.

"'Becase what?' says Terence.

"'Becase,' says Jer, 'if it is n't done—you'll never be asy agin,' says he, 'or pusilanimous in your mind,' says he, 'so ax no more questions, but do my biddin',' says he.

"'Well,' says Terence, 'have your own way, says he.

"An' wid that he tuck the ould gandher, and giv' it to one iv the gossoons.

"'An, take care, says he, 'don't smother the crathur,' says he. Well as soon as the bird was gone, says Jer Garvan says he, 'do you know what that ould gandher *is*, Terence Mooney?'

"'Divil a taste,' says Terence.

"'Well then,' says Jer, 'the gandher is your own father,' says he.

"'It's jokin' you are,' says Terence, turnin' mighty pale, 'how can an ould gandher be my father?' says he.

"'I'm not funnin' you at all,' says Jer, 'it's thrue what I tell you, it's your father's wandhrin' sowl,' says he, 'that's naturally tuck pissession iv the ould gandher's body,' says he. 'I know him many ways, and I wondher,' says he, 'you do not know the cock iv his eye yourself,' says he.

"'Oh blur an' ages!' says Terence, 'what the divil will I ever do at all at all,' says he, 'it's all over wid me, for I plucked him twelve times at the laste;' says he.

"'That can't be helped now,' says Jer. 'it was a sevare act surely,' says he, 'but it's too late to lamint for it now,' says he, 'the only way to prevint what's past,' says he, 'is to put a stop to it before it happens,' says he.

"'Thrue for you,' says Terence, 'but how the divil did you come to the knowledge iv my father's sowl, says he, 'bein' in the ould gander,' says he.

"'If I tould you, says Jer, 'you would not undherstand me,' says he, 'without book-larnin' an' gasthronomy,' says he, 'so ax me no questions,' says he, an' I'll tell you no lies; but blieve me in this much,' says he, 'it's your father that's in it,' says he, 'an' if I don't make him spake tomorrow mornin', says he, 'I'll give you lave to call me a fool,' says he.

"'Say no more,' says Terence, 'that settles the business,' says he, 'an' oh!

blur and ages is it not a quare thing,' says he, 'for a dacent respictable man,' says he, 'to be walkin' about the counthry in the shape iv an ould gandher,' says he, 'and oh murdher, murdher! is not it often I plucked him,' says he, 'an' tundher and ouns might not I have ate him,' says he, and wid that he fell into a could parspiration, savin your prisince, an' was on the pint iv faintin' wid the bare notions iv it. Well whin he was come to himself agin, says Jerry to him quiet an' asy, 'Terence,' says he, 'don't be aggravatin' yourself, says he, 'for I have a plan composed that i'll make him spake out,' says he, 'an' tell what it is in the world he's wantin,' says he, 'an' mind an' don't be comin in wid your gosther an' to say agin anything I tell you,' says he, 'but jist purtind, as soon as the bird is brought back,' says he, 'how that we're goin' to sind him to-morrow mornin' to market, says he, 'an' if he don't spake to night,' says he, 'or gother himself out iv the place,' says he, 'put him into the hamper airly, and sind him in the cart, says he, 'straight to Tipperary, to be sould for ating,' says he, 'along wid the two gossoons, says he, 'an' my name isn't Jer Garvan,' says he, 'off he doesn't spake out before he's half way,' says he; 'an' mind,' says he, 'as soon as ever he says the first word,' says he, 'that very minute bring him off to Father Crotty,' says he, 'an' if his raverince doesn't make him ratire,' says he, 'like the rest iv his parishioners, glory be to God,' says he, into the siclusion iv the flames iv purgathory,' says he, 'there's no vartue in my charums,' says he.

"Well, wid that the ould gandher was let into the room agin, an' they all bigined to talk iv sindin him the nixt mornin' to be sould for roastin in Tipperary jist as if it was a thing andoubtingly settled; but divil a notice the gandher tuck, no more nor if they wor spaking iv the Lord Lieutenant, an' Terence desired the boys to get ready the kish for the poulthry an' to settle it out wid hay soft an shnug,' says he, 'for it's the last jauntin' the poor ould gandher 'ill get in this world,' says he. Well as the night was getting late, Terence was growin' mighty sorrowful an' down-hearted in himself entirely wid the notions iv what was goin' to happen. An as soon as the wife an the crathurs war fairly in bed, he brought out some illigant potteen, an' himself an Jer Garvan sot down to it an be-gorra the more anasy Terence got, the more he dhrank, and himself and Jer Garvan finished a quart betune them: it wasn't an imparial though, an more's the pity, for them wasn't anvinted antil short since; but divil a much matther it signifies any longer if a pint could hould two quarts, let alone what it does, sinst Father Mathew, the Lord purloin his raverence, begin'd to give the pledge, an wid the blessin iv timperance to deginerate Ireland. An be-gorra, I have the medle myself; an its proud I am iv that same, for abstamiousness is a fine thing, although it's mighty dhry. Well, whin Terence finished his pint, he thought he might as well stop, 'for enough is as good as a faste,' says he, 'an I pity the vagabond,' says he, 'that is not able to conthroul his licquor,' says he, an' to keep constantly inside iv a pint measure,' says he, an wid that he wished Jer Garvan a good night, an' walked out iv the room. But he wint out the wrong door, being a thrifle hearty in himself, an not rightly knowin' whether he was standin' on his head or his heels, or both iv them at the same time, an' in place iv gettin' into bed, where did he thrun himself but into the poulthry hamper, that the boys had settled out ready for the gandher in the mornin'; an' sure enough he sunk down soft an complate through the hay to the bottom; an wid the turnin' an roulin' about in the night, the divil a bit iv him but was covered up as shnug as a lumper in a pittaty furrow before mornin'. So wid the first light, up gets the two boys, that war to take the sperit, as they consaved, to Tipperary; an they cotched the ould gandher, an put him in the hamper and clapped a good wisp iv hay an' the top iv him, and tied it down strhong wid a bit iv a coard, and med the sign iv the crass over him, in dhread iv any harum, an put the hamper up an the car, wontherin' all the while what in the world was makin' the ould burd so surprisin' heavy. Well, they wint along quite anasy towards Tipperary; wishin' every minute that some iv the neighbours bound the same way id happen to fall in with them, for they did'nt half like the notions iv havin' no company but the bewitched gandher, an' small blame to them for that same. But, although they wor shaking in their shkins in dhread iv the ould bird biginin' to convarse them every minute, they did not let an' to one another, bud kep singin' and whistlin', like mad, to keep the dhread out iv their hearts. Well, afther they war on the road betther nor half an hour, they kem to the bad bit close by Father Crotty's, an' there was one divil of a rut three feet deep at the laste; an' the car got sich a wondherful chuck goin' through it, that it wakened Terence within in the basket.

"'Bad luck to ye,' says he, 'my bones is bruck wid yer thricks, what the divil are ye doin' wid me?'

"'Did ye hear any thing quare, Thady?' says the boy that was next to the car, turnin' as white as the top iv a musharoon; 'did ye hear anything quare soundin' out iv the hamper?' says he.

"'No, nor you,' says Thady, turnin' as pale as himself, 'it's the ould gandher that's gruntin' wid the shakin he's gettin,' says he.

"'Where the divil have ye put me into,' says Terence inside, 'bad luck to your sowls,' says he, 'let me out or I'll be smothered this minute,' says he.

"'There's no use in purtending,' says the boy, 'the gandher's spakin' glory be to God,' says he.

"'Let me out, you murdherers,' says Terence.

"'In the name iv the blessed Vargin,' says Thady, 'an' iv all the holy saints, hould yer tongue you unnatheral gandher,' says he.

"'Who's that, that dar to call me nicknames,' says Terence inside, roaring wid the fair passion, 'let me out, you blasphamious infiddles,' says he, 'or by this crass I'll stretch ye,' says he.

"'In the name iv all the blessed saints in heaven,' says Thady, 'who the divil are ye?"

"'Who the devil would I be, but Terence Mooney,' says he. 'Its myself that's in it, you unmerciful bliggards,' says he, 'let me out, or by the holy, I'll get out in spite iv yes,' says he, 'an by jaburs, I'll wallop yes in arnest,' says he.

"'It's ould Terence, sure enough,' says Thady, 'isn't it cute the fairy docthor found him out,' says he.

"'I'm an the pint iv snuffication,' says Terence, 'let me out I tell you, an' wait till I get at ye,' says he, 'for be-gorra, the divil a bone in your body but I'll powdher,' says he; an wid that he bigined kickin' and flingin' inside in the hamper, and dhrivin' his legs agin the sides iv it, that it was a wondher he did not knock it to pieces. Well, as soon as the boys seen that, they skelped the ould horse into a gallop as hard as he could peg towards the priest's house, through the ruts, an' over the stones; an' you'd see the hamper fairly flyin' three feet up in the air with the joultin; Glory be to God! So it was small wondher, by the time they got to his Raverence's door, the breath was fairly knocked out iv poor Terence; so that he was lyin' speechless in the bottom iv the hamper. Well, whin his Raverince kem down, they up an they tould him all that happened, an' how they put the gandher into the hamper, an' how he bigined to spake, an' how he confissed that he was ould Terence Mooney; and they axed his honour to advise them how to get rid iv the spirit for good an' all. So says his Raverince, says he,

"'I'll take my booke,' says he, 'an I'll read some rale sthrong holy bits out iv it,' says he, 'an' do you get a rope and put it round the hamper,' says he, 'an' let it swing over the runnin' wather at the bridge, says he, 'an' its no matther if I don't make the spirit come out iv it,' says he.

"Well, wid that, the priest got his horse, an' tuck his booke in undher his arum, an' the boys follied his Raverince, ladin' the horse down to the bridge, an' divil a word out iv Terence all the way, for he seen it was no use spakin', an' he was afeard of he med any noise they might thrait him to another gallop an' finish him intirely. Well, as soon as they war all come to the bridge, the boys tuck the rope they had with them, an' med it fast to the top iv the hamper an' swung it fairly over the bridge; lettin' it hang in the air about twelve feet out iv the wather; an' his Raverence rode down to the bank iv the river, close by, an' bigined to read mighty loud and bould intirely. An' when he was goin' on about five minutes, all at onst the bottom iv the hamper kem out, an' down wint Terence, falling splash dash into the water, an' the ould gandher a-top iv him; down they both went to the bottom wid a souse you'd hear half a mile off; an' before they had time to rise agin, his Raverence wid the fair astonishment giv his horse one dig iv the spurs, an before he knew where he was, in he went, horse an all, a-top iv them, an' down to the bottom. Up they all kem agin together, gaspin' an' puffin', an' off down wid the current wid them, like shot in undher the arch iv the bridge, till they kem to the shallow wather. The ould gandher was the first out, an' the priest and Terence kem next, pantin' an blowin' an more than half dhrounded, an' his raverence was so freckened wid the dhroundin' he got, and wid the sight iv the sperit as he consaved that he wasn't the better iv it for a month. An' as soon as Terence could spake, he swore he'd have the life iv the two gossoons; but Father Crotty would not give him his will; an' as soon as he was got quiter they all endayvoured to explain it, but Terence consayved he went raly to bed the night before, and his wife said the same; but some said she might have mistook Jer Garvan for her husband, an' his Raverince said it was a mysthery, an' swore if he cotched any one laughin at the accident, he'd lay the horsewhip across their shouldhers; an' Terence grew fonder an' fonder iv the gandher every day, until at last he died in a wondherful ould age, lavin' the gandher afther him an' a large family iv childher; an' to this day the farm is rinted by one iv Terence Mooney's lineal and legitimate posteriors.

SPALATRO.

ROM THE NOTES OF FRA GIACOMO.

IN TWO PARTS—PART I.

The Spalatro, surnamed Barbone, of whom we speak, was not the illustrious bandit of Napoleon's early time, who assumed, or acquired, that name, but the celebrated original, who first bore it two centuries since. This man was nobly born, lost his parents early, squandered his fortune, and then "took to the road" professionally. He speedily became one of the most powerful, if not *the* most powerful, of Italian robbers of any age. His followers were so numerous, so well armed, and so hardy, that none of the states cared unnecessarily to meddle with him, but contented themselves with acting to the best of their ability upon the defensive; it is even said that *Venice* allowed this desperado a secret stipend upon the condition that her territories should be exempted from his depredations: however this may be, it is certain that he made himself so universally dreaded, that but for his singular rashness, he might have lived in as much security, and died in as much splendour, as ever did an absolute prince. He was, however, foolish enough to visit the city of St. Mark during the carnival, and happening to quarrel with a party of young fellows, he killed three of them, but being overpowered by numbers, was taken, and after a protracted examination before the state inquisition, was executed between the pillars in the piazetta, beside the Doge's palace.

In the hall of the great council, in

the ducal palace, whither, upon the suppression of the republic, the famous library of St. Mark was transferred, the reader, should he happen to visit it, will find at the right of the great entrance, a series of huge tomes, in which are bound up a heterogeneous mass of manuscripts of all kinds —poems, chronicles, and church music. Among them he will discover a voluminous collection, in the hand-writing of one who calls himself "Fra Giacomo, the humblest of the servants of God, and of the republic, and messenger of peace to the victims of justice." He appears for many years to have acted as confessor to the state prisoners of Venice, and jotted down, in his own hand, abundant notes of the secrets of which he thus became possessed.

On this day, writes brother Giacomo, I visited, for the fourth time, the renowned and unhappy Spalatro. He is the boldest criminal I ever spoke with; there is not in him the fear of death or the fear of God. He will neither pray, nor confess, nor have any of the rites of the church. Yesterday as I talked with him in the prison, he fell suddenly upon the floor in a fit of epilepsy, to which it seems he has been long subject. When he was somewhat recovered I began to argue with him on his hardened state of wickedness, and asked him if he never thought how he should fare in the other world, were death to come in one of these fearful seizures; to which he answered readily and coolly, that he knew well how he should fare, and had no need to inquire; thereupon I talked to him long and seriously, and he listened and answered with more respect than heretofore: he told me that he believed in the existence of God, and in that of the devil, but that he thought little about the Christian religion, having no interest in it. He went on with much excitement, and among other strange things he said—"Were I to tell you why I believe in the great spirits I have named, you would think me mad. I have seen things, these eyes have seen them, which my lips shall never tell. Were I to speak them, you and all other men would laugh at me, and you would pronounce the TRUTH, because it is unlike what you are in the habit of seeing every day, an impossibility and a lie; but of this be assured, that I know better than any other man can what is in store for me; as for your prayers, and relics, and solemnities, I hold them in mere contempt. You can alter no man's condition. You and your fraternity of monks could more easily dislodge the island upon whose breast this prison sits, than sway in the least degree the immutable destiny of a human soul, or bring its future dwelling one inch nearer to heaven, or farther from hell—tush! I know more of these matters than half your divines."

When I visited him to-day, this most unfortunate and sinful man was in extraordinary spirits, and full of jests and levity. I was so disgusted with this, that I was about to leave the cell, when he requested me to stay, at the same time apologising for his thoughtlessness, and assuring me he meant no offence. When he chooses he can be very courteous and even engaging. I staid with him for a long time, and he has told me the story of his life. Gracious God! such a story. I feel like one just awaked from a fearful dream. I cannot believe, and yet I know not how to reject it. The tale was told with groans, and tears, and tremblings, and agonies of excitement. My mind is full of doubts and fears. I have no more certainty, no more *knowledge*, mystery and illusion are above, and below, and around me. May God sustain me else my mind will be lost, irrevocably lost in the abyss of horror. The narrative was as follows, I give his own words as nearly as I can:—

"My mother was a lady of high birth, and of some fortune; she married, when a mere girl, a French nobleman, Count d'Orbois. This marriage was in every way unfortunate. The count was attached to the French court, whither he took his lady, and having been thus separated from her friends, she was speedily made to feel the dependence of her condition in the bitter sense of conjugal indifference and desertion. Under these ill auspices, which my after life in no part belied, I entered the world, and forty-eight hours after my birth my father, who had never set eyes upon me, having gambled all night with ill success, fought two duels in the morning, in the second of which he was so unfortunate as to be run twice through the body, and killed on the spot. My mother returned to Rome with some small wreck of property, and after two years of widowhood, being a person of singular beauty, agreeable and lively manners, and of unexceptionable birth, she was proposed for by the Marchese Picardi, and accepted him. My earliest recollections are associated with the noble scenery of the Apennines, to the eastward of Rome, and not far from Celano. There in the grand old castle, which has for ages belonged to the Picardi family, I passed the early and the only happy years of my existence. Here, however, I lost my best and tenderest friend, the only one who ever cared very much about me—my mother. She died when I was about six years of age, having had, by her second marriage, two children—a son and a daughter. My step-father, for he soon made it plain that he was resolved to be no more to me, was a man of a naturally cold and somewhat stern temper. He did not love me, and his preference of the others, however natural, galled and wounded me. I resolved, so soon as I should have the right to demand the small sum of money which was my only inheritance, to claim it, and depart for ever from the castle. The feelings of pride and mortification in which this resolution had taken its rise, were far, however, from being always present to my mind. I loved my sister and my brother too—selfish though he was I loved him. I do believe, good father, that I might have been a worthy man, as men go, were it not for a certain pride, which rose into madness even under the show of wrong or oppression, and a kind of ardour and impetuosity which left no room for rest or caution. Although, as I have said, the Marquis Picardi refused me any place in his affections, he did not suffer me to want the advantages of such an education as became a gentleman. Nor were my instructions confined to the mere corporal accomplishments of fencing, horsemanship, and the like; on the contrary, the larger portion of my time was devoted to intense and ardent study. My instructor in all intellectual pursuits was an old monk, from the neighbouring monastery of Carmelites; and as some strange adventures in my after life were connected with this man, you will excuse me if I describe him briefly. He was a man of great age, his features were commanding and classic, his forehead was bold and intellectual, and furrowed with the lines of deep thought; the baldness of age had supplanted the tonsure, a few locks of snow-white hair, venerably covered his temples, and a long and singularly handsome beard of the same pure white, fell upon his bosom. His figure was rather tall, though slight, and might once have been athletic, but now it was bowed under the weight of years. Clothed in the brown habit of his order, it were hard to conceive a more picturesque impersonation of reverend age. One relic of departed youth alone remained to this venerable man, it was the fiery vivacity of an eye, which seemed as though it had never rested or grown dim—an eye under whose glance the buried secrets of the heart arose and showed themselves, which nothing could baffle or escape. This man, brother Anthony, as they called him in the monastery, was, as I have said, my instructor, and a more learned or subtle, but at the same time a more *unchristian* one could scarcely have been found. He had in me an ardent and, I believe, by no means an unapt pupil; but in dealing his instructions he had a strange delight in setting my mind to work upon subjects which I verily believe no human mind could bear. The fearful themes of time and eternity, and the Godhead in its vastest attributes, were topics in which he loved to engage the faculties of my mind; and I, entangled in the mazy subtleties of his reasoning, or overwhelmed by the magnitude of conceptions after which my mind strained, but which it had not scope or power to comprehend, felt myself often confounded and appalled to a degree which merged upon madness, in such moments the old monk would forget his gravity, and, leaning back in his chair, indulge in an excess of merriment, which little tended to compose my nerves; and strange to say, though I again and again resolved against conversing upon such matters, yet the old man, whenever he pleased, which was often enough, led me to them, as if to make sport for himself out of the perplexities and terrors in which such discourse never failed to involve me. He had, too, a strange pleasure in unsettling all the most established convictions of my mind, and in thus plunging me into an abyss of fearful uncertainty and scepticism from which I have never quite escaped. This kind of metaphysical conversation he not unfrequently seasoned with indirect and artful ridicule of religion, urging, too, in terms which scarcely affected disguise, a philosophy of sensuality unparalleled even in the doctrines of Epicurus. He had, however, in a remarkable degree, the Satanic art of clothing vice in the fairest disguise; and being himself so old as to have no individual interest, further than the inculcation of abstract truth, in the doctrines which he broached, they found the easier access to my mind. It is scarcely wonderful then, if in the hands of such a teacher, so far from acquiring any higher morality, even my natural sense of right and wrong became confused and blunted. This old man, corrupt in heart and powerful in understanding, acquired a strong control over me. I had no affection for him—such a feeling toward him were impossible; cold and full of satire, his nature exhibited to the eye of youth no one quality which was not essentially repulsive; he had yet such intellectual attributes as to fascinate and command. There was, too, between the situation and the character of the man, a strange and mysterious inconsistency, which filled me with a deep and indefinable interest. Than his station, garb, and habits of life, nothing could be more humble; than his appearance, nothing more worn and aged—yet there were ever breaking from him, not the aspirations of ambition, but the reckless scoffings of conscious and established superiority, and while all his feelings seemed to have withered into the scorched and bitter selfishness of age, his mental faculties were endued with preter-human energy, and an activity nothing short of stupendous—

. . . .

" I was ascending the great stairs of the castle, when methought I heard a shriek. I paused, I listened, I *did* hear a shriek, and another, and another, in quick succession. It was my sister's voice; I hurried towards her room. Several passages I had to traverse on the way; the screams were louder and more rapid, I reached the door, it was fast; I rushed against it and stood in the chamber. Heavens! what did I behold—my sister with hair dishevelled, struggling, terrified, locked in the grasp of the aged wretch, my instructor.

" You see this arm, good father, it was then as lusty and as sinewy as now; with all the force that frenzy gave, I struck the old villain in the face. I might as well have smitten a rock—he turned upon me like a beast at bay. I heard steps in the passage—servants were approaching, but before they entered the chamber the old man grappled with me, and seizing me by the throat, to my shame be it spoken, hurled me with tremendous force senseless upon the floor. When I came to myself the old friar had made his escape, and neither at the castle nor the monastery was heard of more. After this affair I remained at the castle but a year, at the end of which I was enabled to realize my old scheme of departure and independence.

" Mounted upon a powerful grey horse, whose speed and mettle I had often tried—fully equipped and armed for the road, and with some hundred crowns in my pocket—the remainder of my fortune, a small one enough, being lodged to my credit at Rome—I set forth from the old place which had been my home from my earliest days, to throw myself upon the chances of the world. It was not in nature that I should leave this place without keen regrets. Here all my life had been passed, and here were the only living persons who cared for or knew of my existence. As I rode slowly through the wild wood, which far away skirted the rising ground on which the castle stood, I turned to take a last look of the old building. The temper of our minds clothes even things inanimate with an accordant expression; and as I gazed upon its old grey front, it seemed to me that a familiar face looked sadly and reproachfully upon me. Every window and ivy-mantled battlement and buttress—all the picturesque irregularities—each nook and corner of the fine old pile, suggested to my busy memory some affectionate and pleasant remembrance, which moved my heart that we should thus part, and for a moment so softened me, that I was tempted to reject the long-cherished counsels of my pride, and return to the quiet haunts where I had been so happy. But my evil genius triumphed: the struggle was a short one, and I turned my back for ever on the castle, with a heart whose despondency, I might say desolation, gave too true presage of my after life. I put my horse to a rapid pace, and had soon left the scenes of my childhood far behind, and out of sight for ever.

"The evening fell before I had accomplished more than half the way which separated the castle from the village in whose *hostelrie* I proposed to pass the night. The road was broken and difficult of passage—in all respects, except as it served to indicate the direction of my route, rather an obstruction to my progress than tendency to facilitate it. The scenery through which I passed, grand and beautiful at all times, began now to assume that wild and fantastic character which the broad and spectral lights and shadows of a cloudless moon shed on all beneath it. The track which I had for some time followed with much difficulty, now led through a deep and rugged gorge, whose sides, precipitous and broken, were clothed with a dark luxuriant copse. For more than an hour I had neither seen human form nor habitation; but now, for the first time, I felt the depression of solitude. The utter desertion and silence of the place, unbroken except by the moaning of the night wind, filled my mind with that vague, mysterious dread which men attribute to superstition. My heart leaped within me as some broad gray rock, like a sheeted phantom in the hoar light of the moon, suddenly revealed itself; or again, when my excited fancy beheld, in the dark top of some tall fir nodding in the night breeze, a gigantic demon saluting me with "mop and moe," or beckoning me towards it with long fantastic arms. Full of such fancies, which scare us even while we laugh at them, I slowly and painfully pursued my solitary way, frequently scrambling through sloughs and fragments of timber, which storms had dislodged from among the overhanging rocks—often, too, obliged to dismount and lead my horse among chasms and difficulties where his instinct would scarcely have availed him. The labours and anxieties of my progress, were moreover enhanced by very considerable doubts as to the correctness of the path which I was pursuing—doubts which the difficulty, I might almost say the impracticability of the road, very nearly reduced to certainty. While thus struggling onward, my eye was caught by what appeared to be the figure of a horseman, moving cautiously round an abrupt and shadowy prominence, some four or five hundred yards in advance of me. As this figure slowly approached, I had ample opportunity of scanning his garb and equipments. He was mounted upon a tall, dark-coloured horse, and enveloped in a cloak. He wore, moreover, a broad-brimmed and high-crowned hat. Thus much I could plainly distinguish, as the form of the horseman moved between me and the moonlight. As the distance between us lessened, I cautiously laid my hand upon the butt of one of my holster pistols, resolved, if occasion should render it prudent, to deal very briefly with the cavalier in the cloak. When he had approached within about forty yards, or even less, he, perceiving me, it would appear, for the first time, suddenly reined in, and stood in the centre of my path, in strong and marked relief against the clear light of the moon, motionless and dark, as if horse and man were carved out of black marble. Although I never could accuse myself of much timidity in presence of a human antagonist, my situation was not by any means pleasant. That I stood in the presence and within almost certain range of one of those bandits, of whose quick and deadly aim many a marvellous tale was current, I had little doubt; and yet my suspicions were not sufficiently confirmed to warrant me in anticipating his assault by any *overt act* of self-defence. It was clear that, if shots were to be exchanged, he must have the advantage of the first. With a keen and fixed gaze, therefore, I watched every movement of his, prepared, on the appearance of any gesture indicating an appeal to carbine or pistol, instantly to shoot him, if I could. The figure, however, made no such gesture, but, after a considerable pause, addressed me in a rough, good-humoured voice—

"'Signor, you travel late, and on a foul track. Santa Maria! you need a stout heart. Whitherward do you ride?'

"'To Vallechia, signor,' replied I. 'How far do you call it hence?'

"'To Vallechia!' repeated he of the cloak, after a most unceremonious burst of merriment: '*from* Vallechia, I should say. Why, your back hath been turned upon the high road thither for ten miles at the least.'

"'Holy devil!' muttered I, 'here is a pleasant adventure! I even suspected as much.'

"'Nevertheless,' continued the horseman, 'as you *have* left your track, you may as well leave it a little farther. You will find shelter and food, though both somewhat of the coarsest, about a league farther on, in the village; but if you turn back, it is most like you will have to put up with a supperless nap by the road side. Your nag must be well nigh on his last legs. What a devil of a blunder!'

"'A devil of a blunder, indeed,' echoed I. 'I see no better course than that you recommend. About a league a-head you say the village lies?'

"With these words I put my horse again to a walk, intending, before I reached my acquaintance—whom, in spite of his frank air and honest voice, I did not quite like—to stop under pretence of setting my saddle-girths to rights; in reality, in order to let him pass me without the necessity of turning my back upon him.

"'By Saint Anthony, signor,' exclaimed he, as I slowly approached him, 'your horse has gone lame. This is worse again: see, he stumbles. By Bacchus, you must lead him and walk.'

"It was indeed too true. Some strain or damage received in scrambling through the broken inequalities and obstructions of the road had indeed rendered him perfectly lame.

"'Holy apostle!' cried my sympathetic acquaintance, 'this is the very extremity of ill luck. Yes, you have, indeed, but one course before you now, and well if you can achieve it. You must on to the village. Old Beppo can afford you shelter for the night, as well as a fair bottle of wine, and in the morning, if not before, he will set your beast to rights. An honest companion is old Giuseppi, and a first-rate farrier to boot. Three miles hence you will find the old inn by the road side. But here again—here is another rub. *You* must follow the road we are upon, seeing you know no other; and thus, at once, we have the distance doubled;—whereas, if you could but make out your way by the bridle track —— Stay, it must want nearly two good hours of midnight. I have more than half a mind to turn about and set you on the path. I'm time enough—time enough, sir, for my errand;—a funeral—my old cousin's funeral; but I am too early by an hour or more. I can walk my horse ten miles in little more than three hours, and there I am before two o'clock. So never make words about it; I am your man: follow me. I'll lead you as far as the two chestnut trees, and thence I can point out the path to you;—so that, unless misfortune is resolved to make a meal of you, you can't well meet another mishap for this night.'

"So saying, my new friend put his horse into a slow walk in the direction in which I was about to move. 'Of a truth,' thought I, 'a most accommodating gentleman!—somewhat suspicious, though; and yet why should he seem less trustworthy in my eyes than I in his? He may be, after all, a very honest, inoffensive sort of person. At all events, come what will, I cannot part company unless *he* choose it; and, after all, we stand but man to man—and the devil is in the dice if I cannot make good my own in a fair field.' With these encouraging reflections, I followed my companion along the unequal road, under the broad shadowy boughs of the wild wood, which covered the sides of the glen. The path, after many windings, opened upon a wide level, surrounded by low hills, and covered unequally by patches of forest. As we pursued our way, my comrade chatted gaily, now and then interrupting his discourse with some fragment of an ancient ditty, and altogether with so frank and joyous an air, that my suspicions gradually disappeared, and instead of keeping cautiously in the rear, I took my place by his side. A handsome face, carrying an expression at once bold and honest, and lit up, as it seemed habitually, with a reckless, jolly good humour, further won upon my good opinion. I laughed and talked freely with him, and it was with real regret that at length I reached the spot where he was to leave me to explore the rest of my way alone.

"'Here we are, signor,' said he, reining in his steed—'here we are at the two chestnuts, and here we part.

Now mark my directions, for a mistake may cost you your supper. You see that gray rock on which the moon is shining. It stands just beside three or four old trees. Pass by that and turn to your right behind that dark screen of wood; ride through the open glade for about half a mile, and when you reach the open ground, ride right a-head, and a few hundred yards will see you upon the road again: then take the left hand, and ten minutes will bring you to the inn, the first building you meet, a large house with some old fruit trees about it—and so signor, good night.'

" With these words my companion turned his horse's head away, and at a slow trot began to retrace his steps. I watched him until his receding figure disappeared in the mists of night; and then, with a light heart, began to follow the course which he had indicated.

" By a close attention to the directions which I had received, I reached the road, and was proceeding leisurely upon it toward the object of my immediate search, when my ear was struck by the sound of a voice chanting a song, but so far away that I could distinguish nothing more than that the tones were those of a man. As I rode on, however, the sounds became more and more distinct, and at length I clearly descried the object from whence they issued. A little man was seated by the road side, upon a block of stone, or some other temporary resting-place, and, with folded arms and his legs extended before him, was chanting lustily, and with no very harmonious cadences, some rude amatory verses. Upon seeing me he forthwith suspended his vocal exercises, stood erect, walked two or three paces away from the road—stopped, turned round, and altogether appeared very much discomposed by the interruption which my evidently unexpected arrival had caused. Having exchanged a courteous salutation, I had passed on some short distance, when the little man overtook me.

" ' Signor,' said he, doffing his cap with a lowly reverence, as soon as he had reached my horse's head, ' will you pardon a great liberty ?'

" ' Readily, I dare say,' replied I. ' Speak freely—can I serve you?'

" ' Most essentially, your excellency,' replied he. ' I am a poor man, a trader in small wares: they are here in my pack—the whole set are not worth a ducat; and I have not sold to the value of a baiocco. I am indeed, sir, miserably poor—oh, miserably poor!'

" ' Do you want an alms ?' inquired I.

" ' No signor,' he replied; ' no, I do not want alms, though I do not know how soon I may,' he added hastily. ' Heaven knows I am wretchedly poor !'

" ' What, then, would you have of me, in the name of patience?' cried I. ' Speak out, man.'

" ' Merely, sir,' replied he, with an effort—' merely your company. I presume your course lies through some neighbouring town, where I might get my supper and rest. An onion and a piece of bread supplies the one, and an armful of straw the other. We poor men must live as we may.'

" ' You have rightly guessed,' replied I. ' I *am* on the way to a place of refreshment; and unless the guide with whom I have just parted has deceived me, we are now even within a mile of it. So walk with me, and welcome.'

" The poor man was profuse in his acknowledgments; and so, toward the village we went, side by side. As we proceeded, I could perceive pretty plainly that my companion was by no means well at ease. Many and fearful glances he stole around, and not unfrequently I detected him in the act of glancing stealthily and suspiciously at myself. Whatever misgivings, however, he may have had respecting me, they were soon laid at rest, and he began to converse with me with less reserve, and in a tone bordering upon the confidential.

" ' Signor,' said he, ' I am rather a timid traveller, especially in the neighbourhood of these hills. The fact is, sir,' continued he, lowering his voice to a whisper, ' I was once robbed among them, about twenty years ago: stripped to my skin, and nothing left me but a pair of old trousers: and, after all, I had a run of two miles or more to get out of the villains' hands. I should have died of fatigue and exhaustion but for the charity of some good monks—the saints reward them !'

" The caution of the worthy pedlar was, then, to say the least of it, perfectly justifiable; yet I own that I frequently gratified my taste for the comical during the course of our brief journey, by practising upon the ever-wakeful fears of my companion—ample opportunity for which was afforded in the dim uncertain outline of the rocks and underwood with which the ground was unequally covered, and which, in many places, offered a rude resemblance to the outline of human figures grouped together. Thus chatting, we had ridden on for some time, when to my infinite satisfaction, and no less so to that of my companion, we came in sight of the object of our march.

"The road, at the point at which we had arrived, made a sudden sweep down an abrupt descent, which terminated in the bottom of a glen, intersected in its middle by a winding river, whose foam and eddies glittered like silver in the moonlight. Over this river the road was conducted by an old ivy-mantled bridge, at the far end of which stood the ruins of an ancient town. Some fine old trees cast their broad leaves over the road, and sheltered, in picturesque groups, a quaint and extensive building, which stood upon the near side of the river, having something of the mixed character of a house and a castle—in many parts very much decayed and dilapidated, and in some even ruinous. The deep-mouthed baying of a watch-dog now arose from the solitary yard of the old place, enhancing, if any thing were required to do so, by its angry howlings, the desolate and melancholy character of the scene. This old building, then, was the inn to which my recent guide had directed me, and a comfortless one, judging by external appearances, it was likely to prove. Arrived at the door, we gave summary notice of our advent by repeated knockings administered with hearty good will, and accompanied by the most vociferous clamours upon honest Beppo. But although these noises, by no means inconsiderable, were improved into a most energizing din by the furious yellings of the watch-dog, we had long to wait before our summons produced any other effect than that of wearying ourselves. At length a window at some height in the building was opened, and a shrill cracked voice inquired, in no very courteous tones, what we wanted. After some parley, the window was closed again, and in a short time an old grey-headed little man, half habited, opened the door, and after a curious scrutiny, assisted by the light of a small lamp which he held in his hand, admitted myself and my companion into a kind of hall, whose shattered wainscotting and ruinous' appearance promised no very cheering reception. Before entering, I transferred my pistols from the holster pipes to my coat pocket, and throwing the reins upon my horse's neck, trusted to his exhausted condition to keep him from wandering far. At the same time I directed the old man, who was indeed Beppo himself, to have the beast cared for. This done, I followed mine host through several passages and chambers, at the end of which I found myself in a huge old-fashioned kitchen, on whose hearth blazed and crackled a cheerful fire of wood. Stretched on the stone floor before it lay two boys, fast asleep, and by its side, in a chair, sat a girl, also soundly slumbering. At the harsh and well-known accents of old Beppo, the three sleepers started to their feet, and after some grumblings on their part, and not a few oaths and imprecations on his, they began to apply themselves in right earnest to make us comfortable.

"Speedily were we, myself and my humble companion, who at my invitation shared the repast, supplied with a cold pasty and a steaming omelet, and with right good will did we apply ourselves to these right savoury viands, seasoned, too, as I had been led to expect, with a bottle of excellent wine. When I had somewhat appeased the rage of hunger and thirst, I began leisurely to scan the apartment and its inmates. In the former I observed nothing worthy of remark, but to my no small surprise, among the latter I recognised, in the girl whom I had seen sleeping by the hearth on my entrance, a kitchen-wench, who having served in the Picardi castle for several years, had suddenly one night disappeared, without leaving any trace to suggest whitherward she had gone, or what had become of her. On seeing and recognising this poor creature thus unexpectedly, I was about to utter an exclamation of surprise when she checked me by a gesture of alarm and impatience, accompanied by a glance of peculiar significance towards the old inn-keeper, who was now standing before the fire, with his back towards us. In compliance with the mute direction of the girl, I thereupon remained silent, having, by a repeated and more accurate inspection, satisfied myself of the identity of the person. There was something in the expression of face with which the girl had glanced at the old man, brief though that glance had been, which left upon my mind an indefinable and unpleasant impression; nor was this ambiguity of feeling towards my host at all favourably determined by the peculiarities of his outward man. He was, as I have said, a small man, his body, disproportioned to his limbs, was long, and curved like that of a wasp; his shoulders were unusually narrow, and this defect was rendered more conspicuously striking by the enormous magnitude of his disproportioned head; his hair was grizzled and long, his eyebrows bushy, his eyes restless, and in expression very sinister, his nose flat and drooping, his mouth large and furnished with a perfect row of jagged fangs. A considerable projection of the under jaw, added to a face which expressed, in no ordinary degree, cunning and deceit, a character of sternness which, in moments of the smallest excitement, amounted almost to ferocity. Such features and such a cast of countenance were, in themselves, a cautionary notice; and though clothed in all the graces and smiles of what, from the moment that my dress, which was of rich material, caught the light, had become a studiously courteous welcome, could not banish or disguise what, in my mind, appeared the ineffaceable stamp of guilt. I know not how it was, however, though thus clearly appreciating the villanous character stamped upon the face of this man, no shadow of suspicion or thought of danger associated with him for a moment crossed my mind; on the contrary, I felt in unusual spirits, and altogether free from reserve. I laughed, I joked, I sang songs; I compelled the poor little pedlar to do the same, and whether it was that the snug fire and cosy kitchen had kindled the spirit of the vagrant merchant, or, as I more than half suspect, that the wine of which he had partaken contained some strange ingredient, certain it is that he met my gaiety with more than corresponding hilarity and confidence; he sang his best songs, and told a hundred stories of strange adventures, in which he himself had played the part of hero; he even went so far as to boast of his bargains, and dropped plentiful hints to the effect that he was by no means so poor a man as he might seem, and, in short, was to the full as indiscreet as I, if not more so.

"Suddenly, however, and almost in the midst of his boisterous jollity, the honest pedlar leaned back in his chair, and was almost instantly fast asleep. The inn-keeper shrugged his misshapen shoulders, smiled, and shook his head, observing, at the same time, 'Poor devil! how tired he is—pity such a light heart should have so hard a trade. Would you, signor, desire to see your chamber?'

"I assented.

"'Martha,' continued he, turning to the girl, and pointing to the slumbering pedlar, 'let this honest man have such a resting-place as you can make out for him at so short notice. You may as well make it here—not in in *that* corner, devil!' he suddenly exclaimed, fixing on the girl a tremendous look—'not in that corner, you limb of hell!' and then, after a pause, he added, 'place it here, in the neighbourhood of the fire, snug and warm; the poor man must be made comfortable. These sluttish servants,' continued he, probably in the way of apology for his unaccountable burst of fury, 'are enough to make Job himself blaspheme.'

"So saying, and muttering all the way to himself, he led me through several passages to the foot of a clumsy and antique staircase of oak; this we ascended, and traversing the creaking and half rotten flooring of several rooms, whose bare and mildewed walls afforded but a dreary augury of what I was to expect, my host threw open a large door, with massive and dingy pillars of carved wood at either side, and with a low reverence informed me that this was my chamber. I entered, and found a spacious apartment hung with dusty and tattered tapestry, whose desolate appearance was much enhanced by the absence of all furniture, excepting a bed without curtains, whose four tall posts stood at their respective corners naked and comfortless as the shorn masts of a wreck; two or three old chairs and one small table completed the garniture of the room. Opposite to the foot of the bed, and at the same side with the door through which we had entered, was the hearth, exhibiting a huge and shadowy chasm, which might have stabled, at least, two horses comfortably. The cheerless aspect of this place, with all its dust, cobwebs, and nakedness about it, speedily subdued the frolicsome spirit which had kindled so madly within me in the snug old kitchen, by the roaring fire of crackling faggots. There was something hungry and treacherous in the dark and comfortless chamber, which accorded well with the sinister and forbidding aspect of my host—something which indistinctly boded danger, and whispered to the startled ear BEWARE! My host placed the candle upon the table, and, with another profound reverence and a courteous benediction, took his departure.

"I was now alone. It is wonderful how intensely the outward seeming of things, the mere form and colour of what surrounds us, will move the temper of the mind. Had my host conducted me to a snug modern-looking chamber of moderate dimensions, with due allowance of tables, chairs, wardrobes, and curtains, and containing, above all, a cheery fire in the grate, I should probably have enjoyed the same cheerful good humour, sleeping or waking, throughout the night; but as it was, in a vast and dim old chamber, through whose damp vacancy a solitary candle shed a partial and uncertain light, if possible more depressing than darkness itself, far, as it seemed, from the inhabited part of the mansion, and separated by a long succession of passages, and chambers, and staircases, which I should have been puzzled to retrace, from all the human inhabitants of the house, I felt, I knew not how, a certain suspicion and uneasiness creep over me, which I could neither account for nor control. Without undressing, I threw myself upon the bed, leaving the candle burning upon the table beside me. I soon fell into an uneasy slumber, from which, however, I speedily started with that vague sensation of horror which sometimes overcomes the slumbering mind. I gazed fearfully round the room; it was empty as before. I sate up in the bed, and raised the candle above my head, that its light might fall more distinctly on every object; but no, there was nothing to awaken my suspicions; all was silent, and just as I had left it. I lay down again, but could not sleep. I felt restless, anxious, and almost awestruck. A kind of vague, superstitious excitement came upon me; I could not rest; I could not remain still; I got up, and, taking the candle in my hand, resolved to satisfy myself that nothing was lurking in the obscure corners of the room. I seized my naked sword in one hand, and the candle in the other, and proceeded to search every nook and cranny of the chamber. I even went so far as to examine the huge chimney: in its dark chasm the faint light of the candle was lost at once, and I remember well thrusting, as high as my arm could reach with my rapier, but without any result except that two or three bats whirred down, and flitted round me in wide, uneven circles. Few who have ever indulged the kind of uneasiness which at that moment actuated me, can be ignorant that when once yielded to, it asserts the most capricious and unreasonable dominion over its victim, leading him, in his fantastic search, to places which, so far from affording verge enough to a human being, could scarcely accommodate a reasonably-proportioned guinea-pig. In the course of my exploratory rambles, I clambered upon the table to examine the window-sills, which were placed high in the wall, and deeply sunk, lest some assassin should lie coiled in their recesses; and although, as you may have easily anticipated, I found nothing of the kind, yet my scrutiny was rewarded by a discovery which did not tend to quiet my uneasiness. This was no other than a complete set of thick, and by no means antique iron stauncheons, strong and firmly sunk into the stone window-frame above and below. Each window exhibited the same sinister and gaol-like security. I confess I thought this precaution somewhat strange, nor were my suspicions diminished by observing that these bars were unlike all the other garniture of the room, sound and in good repair, in some places exhibiting, apparently with the freshness of yesterday, traces of the skill of the plumber and the smith. I turned now to the door, and opening it, looked out upon the dark passage. There was nothing there but the chill night air, which floated cheerlessly into the chamber, causing my candle to flare and flicker like a torch. I closed it again, and having examined the priming of my pistols, and laid them along with my sword close beside me, I threw myself once more upon the bed. I scorned to admit even to myself that I feared any thing. I had an unbounded reliance upon my own activity and strength, and a sanguine confidence in my fortune. With my good weapons beside me I set all odds at nought, and though ever and anon something within me whispered—'Leave this room and get thee down—the Philistines be upon thee—bestir thyself, lest they take thee sleeping'—yet such thoughts crossed my mind but fleetingly, and were despised.

"As I lay thus listlessly, the sweet slumbers of fatigue stole over me; the chamber in which I lay gradually became confused and indistinct; my fatigues and anxieties were alike forgotten in deep and calm unconsciousness.

"From this state of happy oblivion I was aroused by the pressure of a hand upon my shoulder, and the administration of two or three impatient jolts thoroughly awakened me. I started upright in the bed, and mechanically stretched my hand towards the pistols which lay beside me. The precaution was unnecessary; my visitor was a female—the poor girl whose person I had recognised in the kitchen before. The candle had hardly wasted since I had closed my eyes; I could not have slept a quarter of an hour. I gazed fixedly upon the features of the servant girl; they were tense and pale as those of death: there was such mortal agitation in the face as filled my mind with awe. With an impressive and imploring gesture, several times repeated, she enjoined silence, and then leaning forward, she whispered with slow and startling emphasis—

"'Within a few minutes, *murderers* will come to your bedside: I wish you to escape. Draw the tapestry at this side of your bed; you will find a door behind it; a long passage leads from it to a flight of steps, and they to the kitchen. Wait at the head of the stairs with your drawn sword in your hand, and when you hear me say, God send us all better days, it shall be a signal to you that one of them is about to enter from the kitchen the passage where you stand; drive the sword through him, and run into the kitchen, where you will find another, perhaps two; I shall take care that no more are there. Be firm, and pray to God.'

"With these words she glided speedily from the room, leaving me horror-struck at the sudden and ghastly intimation. With silent rapidity I rose from the bed—my preparations were speedily made. I stuck my pistols in my belt, and taking my naked sword under my arm, I soon found the door which my protectress had described. I extinguished the candle, and, entering the passage, closed the door behind me.

"This passage was extremely narrow and low; the floor and ceiling were of stone; and, as I imagined, its whole width lay in the thickness of the wall. Along this strange corridor I cautiously pushed my way; and, after a progress which appeared all but interminable, I reached the first of a flight of steep stone steps, leading downwards, and here I paused. I had hardly ceased to move when I became conscious that every sound, even that of the lightest foot-tread upon the kitchen floor, was distinctly audible where I stood. I heard the shuffling of many feet to and fro, accompanied by a great deal of whispering. These sounds continuing for a long time, without being followed by any decisive result, my nerves were gradually wrought by the suspense in which I stood to such a pitch of excitement, that I could not remain still. I descended the stairs with the utmost caution. When I had reached the foot, I found a space which afforded little more than standing room. Straight before me, and within a few inches of my face, was the door which opened upon the kitchen. This was a double door, constructed, as I afterwards found, so as to resemble from without a sort of cupboard. A broad chink in the centre, where the two valves met, admitted a bright stream of light; and placing my eye at the aperture, I witnessed, unobserved, a scene which no occurrence of my after life has availed to obliterate.

"At the side of the chamber opposite to that at which I was placed, stood the bed in which lay the poor pedlar: his deep stertorous breathing sufficiently attested the soundness of the slumber in which he was locked. A blazing faggot flamed and flickered on the hearth, throwing an intense but uncertain light over the whole scene. Close by the fire stood two stout fellows, in one of whom I recognised, without difficulty, my good-humoured guide. Beside them sat a third, with his legs extended towards the cheering blaze, while with an air of sublime abstraction, he leisurely smoked a long pipe. At the same time I observed the girl to whom I owed the timely warning, whose success was yet so doubtful, employed in carrying towards the bed in which my poor comrade was sleeping, a large tub, or bucket. Beside the bed stood Giuseppe himself, a hideous incarnation of evil, glaring upon the unconscious slumberer. A boy, resting his head upon the foot of the bed, was fast asleep also. Such was the scene which my first glance through the aperture of the door revealed, under the fierce and restless light of the blazing wood fire. The baleful and ominous scowl which darkened the features of the ill-favoured innkeeper, and something like a foreboding of what was about to happen, rivetted my attention to the group about the humble bed where the poor little traveller lay. The innkeeper stooped forward, and with a sudden jerk of his hand threw the bed-clothes down, so as to leave the upper part of the body of the sleeper bare, except for the coarse shirt which covered it. He next slid his arm gently under the shoulders of the unconscious man, and slowly drew his body towards the edge of the bed. At this moment the girl placed the bucket at the side of the pallet, and with an expression of strange horror turned towards the door where I stood, and passed on from my sight. Giuseppe now drew the shoulders completely over the edge of the couch, so that the head hung down towards the floor. The poor wretch continued to sleep. The innkeeper beckoned now to one of his companions, who stood at the fire. The man came over to the bed, and listlessly shoved the bucket with his foot, until he had brought it directly under the head of the sleeping man. I could endure no more. My resolution was taken. I set my shoulder against the door, and strained every muscle in my body in the desperate effort to burst it open. The effort, tremendous though it was, was made in vain. The door was fastened without, and that so effectually, that the assault with which I had just taxed its strength had hardly availed to make the fastenings creak. Well was it for me, however, that this sound, slight though it was, occurred while the villain was shoving the bucket, as I have just told you, with his foot along the floor. Had that little sound but reached the ear of any of the wretches who occupied the chamber, I must have perished. On such threads hang the lives of men! Weak and exhausted by the fruitless effort which I had made, I resigned myself in mute horror to witness the tragedy which I had no power to prevent. Giuseppe now, in a whisper which froze the life-blood at my heart, repeated the significant words—'Il coltello,' *the knife*. His companion instantly turned to a cupboard, a few steps aside, and returned bearing in his hand the instrument, whose broad blade, as he walked along, he wiped in his jacket sleeve. The cold sweat burst from every pore in my body. I shook like a man in an ague: a deadly sickness came over me; yet I could not move my eyes from the objects, the sight of which filled me with this agony. The man, with the knife in his grasp, now placed himself by the bed, half sitting upon its edge. Giuseppe took the head of the sleeping man between his hands, and supported it with the face turned directly towards the place where I stood. His companion now applied the edge of the knife to the skin of the throat, and moving it slightly along the surface, until it rested upon the spot which he judged most suitable to his purpose, he laid the palm of his left hand upon the back of the blade, and with his whole weight and strength forced it with a mangling gash, so far as almost to sever the head from the body. The crimson blood gushed, or rather spouted, from the chasm, and, with a gurgling sound, poured into the bucket. At the same moment the assassin, dropping the knife upon the floor, threw himself across the body, to control the convulsive strugglings of death. The pedlar had continued fast locked in sleep, until the knife had actually entered his throat. The moment, however, that the fatal stroke was given, the murdered man opened his eyes, and gazed with such an expression of imploring terror and agony, as fancy never beheld. At the same time he opened his mouth—perhaps to shriek—perhaps to pray; but sound was never more to come from thence. Blood bubbled forth, and streamed over his white and quivering face. Again and again he opened his mouth with ghastly strugglings. Nor did this fearful motion cease, until the eye fixed, and the mortal agony ended in death. The innkeeper then wrung the head round, while his companion, with the same knife, ploughed through the tendons and muscles, until they succeeded in actually cutting the head from the trunk. The body lay upon the bed, and the neck still hung bleeding over the tub, into which Giuseppe dropped the head. I could see no more. My brain grew dizzy. A sick faintness came upon me. I clambered, I know not how, up the stairs, and, sitting down upon the uppermost step, I clasped my damp forehead in my hands, and remained for some minutes almost unconscious of every thing, absorbed in one dull, vague feeling of horror.

As soon as I came a little to myself, I plainly perceived, by what I could gather from the whisperings which I overheard from below, that the murderers were engaged in removing the body of their victim. Steps now slowly and unsteadily traversed the kitchen—I suppose those of him who carried the horrible burthen. The outer door was cautiously opened; the steps passed forth, and the door again closed.

"'The gentleman sleeps like a top,' whispered a gruff voice. 'He has put out his candle, and lies still as a dormouse.'

"'Take your stiletto,' replied another. 'Morning will break before you have finished.'

"'Remove your boots, bungler,' cried a female voice. 'Your spurs make jingle enough to ring the dead from their graves.'

"'Peace, gaol-bird,' cried Giuseppe. 'What's that to thee.'

"'Well, well,' exclaimed the girl, with a slow distinct utterance, 'God grant us all better days.'

"I needed not the warning, I had already placed myself in readiness. After a short delay the door, through which I had just witnessed the scene which I have attempted to describe, opened wide. A broad light flashed upon the rugged and narrow stairs, and a tall figure began to ascend. I stood in the deep shadow awaiting his advance; and as soon as he had arrived within two or three steps of the top, I sprang forward, and lunged full at his breast. This was not done so quickly that he did not catch a glimpse of me, as I started forward, in sufficient time to enable him with his arm imperfectly to parry the thrust. As it happened, however, this was all the worse for himself; for instead of turning the sword aside, he merely struck the point upwards, and it entered somewhere near the eye, and, penetrating the brain, killed him on the spot. Without a groan he tumbled headlong over the steps. Springing over his prostrate body, I rushed into the kitchen. Giuseppe and my honest guide were the only males within it. The latter stood nearest to me, and his astonishment at my entrance was such that he did not move. With a deliberate aim of two seconds, I levelled my pistol at his breast and fired, he fell—I know not whether mortally hurt or not, but I never saw him move again. Without the loss of an instant I levelled the second pistol at the innkeeper—but it missed fire—the wretch ran directly to the door, but before his hand had reached the latch I was up with him. With a hideous yell of defiance he sprang round and grappled with me. His strength far exceeded what his figure seemed to promise; but I felt that he was still no match for me. In a moment I hurled him back upon the gory pallet, and planted my knee upon his breast. As we struggled, he caught my left thumb within his teeth, and clenched them upon it until they fairly ground upon the bone. Heedless of the pain, I clutched his throat in my right hand, and pressed with all my might and strength—in vain he struggled—the eyes started—the face blackened. Froth covered my hands, and before two minutes he lay insensible.

"'For God's sake, girl,' cried I, 'give me the pistol.' Silently she obeyed me, and for a moment relaxing my grasp, I seized the weapon by the muzzle, and dashed the heavy butt into his skull—he was dead. Yet such was the strength with which his teeth were locked upon my thumb, that I could not release it until I had beaten out nearly half his teeth, I forced the barrel of the pistol into his mouth, and employing it as a lever, I, with much exertion, unlocked the clenched teeth, and loosed the mangled joint. At this moment I heard a heavy step without, the latch was raised, and one of the fellows who had been present at the murder of the pedlar entered. I did not give him time to recover his surprise, but placing the pistol to his head, I said in a stern and determined voice—'Villain! lead me to a horse. If I am discovered or interrupted, I will blow your brains out.'

"'Good Signor,' said the fellow, evidently ill at his ease, 'patience for heaven's sake—be not rash.'

"'I give you five seconds,' replied I, 'to bring me to a horse: at the end of that time, the condition unfulfilled, I will shoot you through the head, as sure as God is in heaven. Look at those corpses—you see I am in earnest.'

"The fellow said not one word more; but, being himself unarmed, led me quietly from the door of the inn at which we stood to that of the stable. I all the time holding him by the back of the collar, with the pistol close by his head.

"'Choose a strong one, scoundrel,' said I, as we entered the stable, in which stood several horses ready saddled. I compelled him to lead out the steed, and to mount first himself, and springing up behind him, I commanded him to ride on the shortest track leading to the high road to Rome. The moon had gone down, and the night was now so dark that I could not see many yards before me. In obedience to my directions the fellow rode at a hard trot. We had scarcely crossed the bridge, when two figures loomed suddenly in sight, and so directly in advance of us that it required a sudden and violent exertion of the bit which threw the animal back upon his haunches, to prevent our running foul of this nocturnal patrol.

"'Who rides so hard?' inquired one in no very dulcet accents. Here I pressed the muzzle of the pistol against my companion's head, as a salutary hint.

"'Who should it be,' exclaimed my comrade, 'but a friend—do not you know me?'

"'Faith, brother,' replied the same harsh voice, 'it is well we did not rob thee, and thou us;' and marvellously tickled with this pleasant conceit he laughed long and lustily. 'Any news?' added he—'any rabbits in the burrow? any nightingales in the cage—eh?'

"'Ay, two,' replied my companion, 'with their necks wrung. You will see more at the inn. Good night.'

We were passing on, when again one of them exclaimed—

"'Hey! what the devil have you gotten behind you?'

"Again, I let my honest companion feel that the weapon rested upon his skull; and with much *nonchalance*, he replied—

"'What is behind me? why a bag of bloody carrion, if you must have it—but we bandy words two long—when I get rid of this, I'll find you at old Beppo's.'

"'Well, good luck, most holy sexton,' replied the horseman; 'and as for your burthen, *requiescat in pace—amen.*'

"So saying, the two horsemen rode on, and we pursued our way, at the same hard pace until the morning's light began to streak the east.

"Watching my opportunity as we rode rapidly down a steep declivity, I bestowed my companion a vigorous shove, which sent him clean over the horse's head; and before he had well done rolling I had left him four hundred yards behind me. With a courteous valediction I rode on, and without another adventure reached the glorious city of Rome, where strange things befel me, as I shall tell you. But first give me a cup of wine."

SPALATRO.

FROM THE NOTES OF FRA GIACOMO.

IN TWO PARTS—PART II.

"In the heart of a gay capital, possessed of funds which, to my short-sighted inexperience, seemed all but inexhaustible, full of ardour, curiosity, and passion, I threw myself heart and soul into the intoxication and excitement of all the folly, vice, and extravagance which revolved around me; with more of inquisitiveness than of depravity, I hunted out vice in all its secure and secret haunts, where, undisguised, and maddening, and terrible, it ruled and rioted. The adventures and perils of the wild scenes in which I mixed, had for me a strange attraction; I panted to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; I longed to try and prove those old and mighty rulers of the human kind—the ancient vices of the world in the high places of their power; recklessly I courted danger: wildly I plunged into the unfathomable gulf of sin, and madly did time fly by.

"My acquaintances were among the madcap young nobles of the city. There was nothing to withdraw me from the headlong career of sins and follies in which I was borne, except prudence or religion—and I had neither. I resolutely closed my eyes against all distant consequences: I saw but the present—I *would* see no more. I felt that when my wealth was squandered, I would find a way to get more; I cared not how, provided it were boldly, and in the manner of a soldier of fortune. Even then my coming destiny filled the vision of my mind; I beheld it perhaps with awe, but undismayed; for me it had a dreadful fascination—I rushed towards it with a bosom full of defiance and scornful recklessness.

"Fagged and jaded with the last night's debauch, I rose towards evening from the numb and heavy sleep of excess, and wandered forth to breathe the fresh air upon the Corso. It was the carnival—the streets were thronged with masks, jugglers, itinerant gamesters with their various apparatus for cheating the incautious; mountebanks and empirics holding forth upon their crazy stages; noble ladies in rich attire walking with their high-born protectors, and shouldered and jostled by countrymen and beggars—all mingled up in the fantastic mazes of a bewildering and gorgeous dream. Captivated by the never-ending variety of the scene before me; hour after hour flew by; and when at length the sun went down, and twilight was succeeded by the wan splendour of the moon, I still was sauntering among the gay and idle throng, whose groups crossed and flitted before my eyes in such rich and grotesque contrariety. 'Why so sad, young gentleman?' exclaimed a voice close by my ear, while, at the same time, a party-coloured sword of lath was laid smartly upon my shoulder. The speaker was a harlequin, who had turned for a moment from his masked companions to accost me. 'Has thy lady-love frowned, or thy Jew friend been cruel? has thy luck been hard, and thine head soft? are thy creditors more than thy credit? art thou hungry, or thy sweetheart angry? has she broke her faith, and thou not thy fast? if so, sour looks will never mend the matter—lament to-morrow, but laugh to-night. The gods have given but one excuse for glum looks during carnival, and that is the cholic. If thou hast it, thou art right to be religious; but get thee home and pray in bed: thy public piety is a public nuisance. Owlet, avaunt!' A loud smack from his lath weapon enforced the mandate, and under cover of the horse laugh with which the crowd greeted the conclusion of his lecture, the mask unperceived whispered sharply in my ear as he passed—'Keep your eye on me, friend, and follow me; your doing so may save your life. Enough.' With these strange words he plunged once more into the crowd, and mingled as before in the madcap gaieties of the scene. My curiosity was however excited. I followed him carefully, and thought I could observe him occasionally abstract his attention for a moment from the tricks and railleries with which he abundantly entertained the multitude, to steal a glance toward me, and ascertain that I was present. Gradually the harlequin withdrew himself from the group with which he had borne his part, and by little and little separated himself from the crowd, I still following at a short distance. With many a fantastic pirouette and gambol away he flitted through by-lanes and alleys. Again and again was I obliged to run at the top of my speed to keep my strange conductor in view, watching the tall light form with a vigilance so close and exclusive that I knew not through what streets I passed, and scarcely in what direction I was moving. We passed through the scattered houses of the suburbs; and although I strained my sinews to the utmost, my guide gained upon me so fast that I began to grow fearful of losing him altogether. He was now running lightly by the banks of the Tiber—we had passed the thronged dwellings of the city; and the cool air from the quiet country came rushing along the waters, the grateful and refreshing gift of nature. Half vexed at the pertinacious speed with which my companion pursued his course, and half-suspecting the whole affair to be a hoax, I was just about to stop and turn about, when my intention was anticipated by the mask. He suddenly checked his course, sprang into the air, and, with a grotesque flourish of his sword, turned to the right about, awaiting with a low mock reverence my breathless pursuit. I was soon by his side. 'Now in the devil's name, sir harlequin,' exclaimed I, 'for what have you given me this unconscionable race?—your tidings must needs be worth the hearing when a man must run after them as if Beelzebub ran at his heels.' 'Fie, fie,' cried the mask, 'devil and Beelzebub' are ugly words, and especially *now* and *here*. Be, I pray you, a little more pious: you know not what may be near you.' At these words my companion stooped down and lowered his head to a level with the reeds which grew by the river's brink, in the attitude of one who listens attentively for some distant sound—then raising himself, he added in a lower tone, 'We must go further; follow me yet a few steps more.' Accordingly he led the way along the river bank, but now at a slow pace. As he went along he began to sing a strange and mournful air, the like of which I never heard before or since, and *that* with a management of voice, if possible, stranger still. It appeared to me like the most extraordinary ventriloquism; for the sounds seemed sometimes to come from one side—sometimes from another—sometimes high in air—sometimes so far away as almost to be lost in the distance, and again swelling into a fierce and thrilling loudness, as if the voice was rushing toward us with the speed of a whirlwind. I cannot describe to you the strange effect of this music upon me: I felt ready either to laugh or cry—I felt a weight at my heart and an excitement in my head more than hysterical. The words which he sang were odd, and to me unintelligible; but he threw into them a laboured significance which added to the unpleasantness of the whole. The words have remained fixed in my mind, and to this day I cannot utter them without sensations which perhaps you would laugh at. They ran as follows:—

" Child of wrath, with the human bride,
Mighty oppressor of earthly kind,
Thy presence walks with us, side by side.
I feel thee, and know thy soft laugh on the wind.
Kiss, kiss his hot lips again and again;
He has given thee his heart; now master his brain."

" The excitement under which I laboured increased until it amounted to a degree of horror almost unendurable. Under the vague impulse of superstitious terror, I was about to turn and run from my companion, when he, suddenly looking round, exhibited to my astounded sense the features of the hoary monk or DEMON, Father Anthony. Nerved by the extremity of terror, I turned my back upon the abhorred shape, and fled with the speed of light toward the city. The attempt to escape was utterly in vain. Though I ran with a speed which nothing but the agony of terror could have sustained, the fiendish monk not only kept up with me, but ran round and round me—sometimes in narrower, sometimes in wider circles, with gambols of preterhuman agility, and grimaces more hideous than night-mare ever saw. Suddenly he stopped short before me, and by an unearthly sympathy I was constrained to do the same: he sate down upon the earth; by an irresistible impulse I did so likewise. We were opposite to one another—face to face, and scarcely a yard asunder. He tossed his arms wildly in the air—I could not choose but do the same: he writhed his features into contortions such as delirium never portrayed, each one of which, with frenzied exaggeration, I felt forced to imitate. Into these hideous grimaces he threw, at times, expressions of demoniac passion so fearfully intense, that hell itself could not have exceeded them: these too, I was forced to follow, and the dreadful passions themselves possessed me in succession, while all the time, independently of these malignant inspirations, there remained within me, as it were looking on, a terrified self-consciousness. He yelled forth blasphemies the most awful, while my very brain sickened with horror—the unearthly power constrained me to echo them all, tone for tone, and word for word. He advanced his face, I did the same—our features almost touched. He burst into a peal of laughter like that of lunacy, I joined howling in the horrible mirth. Every word *he* spoke, *I* spoke—every movement *he* made, *I* made too. My motions all corresponded with his, with the simultaneousness and accuracy with which shadow follows substance; I felt as if my identity was merging into his. He placed his hand within his bosom—my hand copied the gesture, and rested upon my stiletto; he drew a dagger from his breast—I drew my poignard from mine. At the next instant his weapon was at his throat, and mine at mine. Another moment, and HELL would have had its victim; but it was to be otherwise. A voice close by shouted, ' In the name of God, young man, forbear,' and at the instant I was disenthralled; the hideous figure cast upon me one livid scowl, and threw himself on the ground. I saw no more, for my senses forsook me. How long the demon had made me the sport of his hellish mockeries I cannot say. As soon as consciousness returned I found myself supported in the arms of an honest peasant—he to whose intervention I owed my life.

" ' So, so, master,' exclaimed he, ' a pleasant frolic this, for the carnival—time was, when you youngsters were satisfied with carving your neighbours' throats, but nothing will serve you now, forsooth, but cutting your own. In God's name, young man, why do you seek to harm yourself?'

" ' Tell me,' said I eagerly, ' where he is gone—where is the mask—the harlequin—the devil? Bring me away from this place. Where is the monster you saw before me?'

"'Sir,' replied the man, 'I see you are disordered. I will go with you to the town; here, take my arm.'

"'Where,' I said with increased excitement, 'where is the hellish thing that sate on the ground before me?'

"'Pshaw, sir,' replied he, 'there was nothing before you but yonder old bush; to be sure,' he added, after a thoughtful pause, 'it did sway and tremble rather oddly; and then, when I came up, I saw something like an otter sliding softly through the sedges into the stream. But that is all—come on, signor, let us be moving.'

"Silently I walked with my friendly guide, who cast many a fearful look around, and muttered many a prayer as we proceeded—so contagious is mysterious terror.

"For more than a month I was in mind and body utterly prostrate. There is in youth, however, a recuperative power, an elasticity which never loses its spring while youth remains. In five weeks' time, after an illness, during which mind and body were bound down in the fiery chains of fever for nearly the space of a month, I was once more mingling in all the pleasures and follies of the capital, as if no fears or perils had ever crossed me. As time wore on, I began to grow weary of uncontrolled indulgence. Fashion is a hard task-master—vice and pleasure tire their pursuers at length more than the severest toil—monotony dulls the edge of enjoyment, and the solicitous repinings of conscience wear the spirits, and irritate and embitter the temper; all this I felt, and half (but *only* half) resolved to reform, and lead a better life. In this melancholy mood I was wandering through the oldest and least-frequented streets of the city, when a singular adventure befel me. There was walking before me, with slow and feeble steps, an old and venerable man; his dress was of the richest velvet of that hue which we call *ruby*, lined with yellow satin, and richly overlaid with gold lace; the fashion, however, of his garments was that of another day, and though the suit was no doubt originally a splendid one, it bore no less in its faded colour and tarnished embroidery, than in its obsolete construction, the evidences of extreme antiquity. From under the shadow of a broad-leafed hat his snow-white hair descended in venerable ringlets, covering the topmost folds of his short velvet cloak. In his hand he carried a crutch-handled stick of ebony, which, with measured and solemn action, he impressed upon the pavement as he proceeded. The figure of the old man was slight, and as well as I could discern, elegantly moulded; he bore about him, too, that indescribable air of high birth and breeding which cannot be mistaken. These circumstances, along with the striking peculiarities of which I have already spoken, irresistibly fixed my attention and engaged my curiosity. As I followed in the track of this old man, he suddenly tottered, as if through weakness or giddiness, and would, no doubt, have fallen upon the pavement, had not I instantly caught him in my arms and supported him. He speedily recovered, and with many courteous professions of gratitude, acknowledged my services. These professions were as courteously received as made, and I offered the aged man the support of my arm, during the remainder of his walk. The tender of my support was accepted with eager gratitude, and arm in arm, at a leisurely pace, we walked down the street together. The old man, as I have said, was soon quite recovered; and as we moved slowly along, he conversed with that easy and courtly gaiety by which age can so pleasingly and irresistibly engage and fascinate the young. Almost without knowing how, so pleasantly had my companion beguiled the way, I found myself at the entrance of a venerable mansion, before which my *old* acquaintance made a halt. I looked around me, for so completely had my attention been absorbed in the gay conversation of my comrade, that I had scarcely observed the objects through which we were passing. The street was dark and narrow—the houses on either side tall, sombre, and antique, and withal carrying upon them a character of decay and neglect which added gloom and sadness to a scene already sufficiently uncheery. The street had made a curving sweep, so that at the point where we stood I could see but little way either up or down. As far as I could see, however, it was absolutely empty: there was neither sound of human voice, nor echo of foot-falls, but a silence like that of desolation.

We stood directly in front of a richly-carved and massive stone door-way, the portal of a huge time-worn edifice—a palace, but so weather-stained, neglected, and crumbling, that the evidences of its original architectural splendour served only to render its present aspect more solemn and more sad. Reading, perhaps, in my face what was passing in my mind, the old man, with a melancholy musing smile, accosted me—

"'It is, indeed, a mournful place—little better, perhaps, than a ruin; the street, too, as you observe, well accords with the character of this deserted shrine of hospitality—the spirit of desolation dwells in and about it—the current of human life frets and chafes near and far, but no chance eddy thereof ever finds its way into this dim, silent channel. The roar of human occupation, toil, and jollity, is here swallowed in perennial silence—we never hear it—in almost every house this street contains, you see the monument of some noble family gone to ruin, wasted by prodigality, or struck down into the dust by the heavy arm of power. Those who dwell here seldom seek to look into the staring, noisy world; they think not of the present, but ever upon the past—and oh! how variously. Silence here holds her eternal court—see, lest any careless footstep should break the quiet of the place, gentle dame Nature has spread her soft green mantle over the uneven pavement—the long grass waves in the wind here as in a church-yard: yet, amid all this lonely silence, is there any quiet for heart or brain? Oh, eternal, unforgiving spirit! is there any rest—is there any unconsciousness?'

"He clasped his hands together—his head sank upon his breast, and I saw the tears fall, one by one, fast upon his bosom.

"More shocked than I can describe at what I heard and saw, I stood silently by, scarcely knowing what course to take. I soon, however, grew weary of my foolish situation, and, beginning to regard the whole thing as rather comic than imposing, I asked, somewhat abruptly, whether I could do any thing further for him, at the same time observing that the evening would soon close, and that I had better find my way home while I had light. This speech soon brought the old gentleman to his senses. With many apologies he pleaded to be excused.

"'Signor,' he continued, 'did you but know half what I have endured, far less what I *must still* endure, you would pardon this else unpardonable vehemence. I will not, however, weary you with, after all, what is but too common a tale. Those who have seen as much of life as I have, are seldom happy. I can, however, as you perhaps have perceived, sometimes forget my griefs; and if you will vouch your forgiveness, by entering so poor and unpromising a dwelling as that before you, you will make me more your debtor, sir, than I am.'

"There was a gentleness and even a kindness in the tone and manner in which the old man addressed me which easily prevailed. I at once consented.

"From his pocket he drew a key, to which the street door instantly yielded. Closing the hall-door, which was of massive oak, behind us, he led the way through a stone vaulted passage, and through another door into a spacious and lofty hall, also vaulted, and built of stone; this latter door he also swung to with a heavy crash, which echoed through the empty chamber with many a dreary reverberation. The room in which we now stood was hung round with splendid full-length pictures. It seemed to be a gallery of ancestral portraits. They were superbly painted—evidently from the hands of the most celebrated of our Italian masters: the collection was worth a monarch's ransom.

"'You will find occupation for a few minutes in looking at these old family pictures,' said my host; 'and you will, I hope, pardon me if I leave you to entertain yourself for a brief space.' So saying, the old man made a deep reverence, and before I had time to reply, he darted through a door at the far extremity of the apartment, and disappeared.

"The pictures were very well worth an attentive examination, and afforded me no small pleasure. But there were three placed side by side, over each of which hung from top to bottom a black velvet pall, and although not without some reluctance upon the score of good breeding, to these my curiosity led me by an irresistible attraction. I took my stand upon a stool which stood beneath them against the wall, and raising the covering of the first, I beheld a faithful and very beautifully painted portrait of my entertainer, arrayed precisely as I had seen him. The painting looked old, and yet it represented him not as any younger than he now was. While musing upon this discrepancy, my eye accidentally fell upon some numerals dimly traced in one corner of the canvass. Heavens! the date they recorded was that of more than a century before; yet the portrait was undoubtedly his. It was a perfect likeness—character, expression, every thing—it was a *fac simile* of the original. My convictions, too, were yet further established by observing traces upon the back of the right hand, which rested upon a crutch-handle stick, a deep scar, which had caught my attention in the original, as his hand lay within my arm in our to-day's walk. Again I examined the date, I had read it aright—the year it recorded had been passed nearly a century and a half before, and the mellow tone of the picture itself tallied well with its silent but startling claim to antiquity. With a strange feeling of interest and of horror I suffered the sable drapery to fall again over the picture; and raising the covering of the next, I beheld the portrait of a young lady, richly dressed, and of such surpassing loveliness and grace as my eyes had never seen before. Entranced—lost in wonder and rapture, I gazed upon this beautiful vision; a creature so perfect, of such unutterable, such infinite loveliness had never even dimly visited me in my most ethereal fancies. Like one lost in a sad and beautiful dream, I stood wrapt and moveless, my heart wrung with vain yearnings, for still the thought stole over me that all this most terrible beauty before whose image I stood in this intense worship of every faculty, had long ago passed to dust and darkness. Thus gazing and dreaming on, the tears flowed silently down my cheeks. Strange fascination!

"'You make yourself at home, signor, I'm glad to see,' said the old man, who, unperceived by me was standing by my shoulder.

"I started, and dropped the velvet curtain, and was for some time so confounded as not to be able to articulate a single word. There stood the old man, his figure disposed in precisely the attitude represented in the portrait, his tall crutch-handled stick in his right hand, and his left buried to the wrist in the bosom of his doublet; there he stood in all points—face, attitude, and garb, the breathing incarnation of the picture on which I had just been looking.

"'You examined, then, these portraits?' inquired the old man.

"'Two of them, signor,' I replied with some embarrassment.

"'This one,' continued he, raising the pall which covered the first, 'is accounted extremely like me: it is the portrait of one of my house, a brave man, who fell one hundred and forty years since in the service of the state of Venice. I am reckoned like him, strangers at least account me so.'

"He fixed his eyes upon me, I thought with that uncertain, curious gaze with which those who feel themselves the objects of suspicion, encounter a glance of scrutiny. I averted my eyes, and he, suffering the velvet cloth to drop into its place, turned upon his heel and walked twice or thrice rapidly through the hall; he stopped beside me, and laying his hand kindly upon my shoulder, he said—

"'Come, come, you must not grow melancholy, my young friend; you were looking, when I surprised you, at a portrait of singular beauty, that of a young woman. You shall probably have an opportunity before long of comparing the counterfeit with the original. Will not that bring a smile to your cheek? time was when such a promise would have led me blindfold any where; but I am partial, perhaps, she is my daughter.'

"If the old man looked for compliments upon the beauty of his child, I believe he must have been satisfied, if my words bore any proportion to my feelings. Man never spoke language of more passionate admiration than did I, he smiled and cried 'Bravo,' as I finished; then observing that it was growing dark, he placed his arm within mine, and led me from the hall.

"We passed through several apartments, lofty, damp, and dark, impressed with the character of desertion and decay, but every where carrying the evidences of former splendour.

"We entered a chamber hung with dusky tapestry. The end at which we stood on entering was occupied by a table and some antique chairs, and upon the floor, corresponding with the angles of the table, but at the distance of some six feet, were placed four massive golden candlesticks containing huge wax tapers, which shot into the air to the height of twelve feet, and burned with a flame larger than that of a torch, but white and clear as the light of the sun. The strange effect of these arrangements was much enhanced by another still more extraordinary peculiarity which marked this chamber as unlike any which I had ever seen before. The end of the room at which we stood, as I have already said, was occupied by the table and other furniture which I have mentioned, but the opposite extremity of the chamber I could not see. It was effectually shrouded from my sight by a light semi-transparent vapour, which rolled and eddied in cloudy volumes within some twenty or thirty feet of the table—beyond this distance it did not come—some invisible influence held it back, and there it hung, forming a strange, heaving barrier, a mysterious impenetrable veil between human vision and sights, perhaps, unsuited to its ken. These odd peculiarities of the room in which I found myself were not without their effect upon my imagination and spirits—a sense of unknown danger overshadowed me. I recounted in my own mind the circumstances of my meeting with my host; every thing which had happened since appeared to me to furnish matter of indefinite and horrible suspicion; yet when I looked upon the mild features of the venerable old man, and read in the play of his cheerful eye the returning animation of that gay spirit which had so won upon me at first, I felt my doubts rebuked, and my superstitious fears absolutely ridiculous. Still, however, a gloom was upon me, and it required a perpetual effort to prevent the unpleasant impressions which I could not dispel from deepening into awe and terror.

"The old man motioned to me to sit down in one of the great antique chairs by the table, which was covered with golden plates, and dishes, and cups. You will readily believe me when I tell you that I had no desire to eat. I took advantage then of my host's abstemiousness to avoid partaking of his viands, and this was the first and the last supper at which I ever sate where not one dish was invaded or even uncovered.

"'Well,' said my entertainer, 'as you will not eat, you needs must drink: if you will imitate my vices, copy at least my solitary virtue.' So saying he drew towards himself one of the cups which stood upon the table, and shoved another to me. 'Old men have a right to be selfish,' said he, 'and, therefore, wishing myself many repetitions of this evening, and that out of this casual rencounter may arise a lasting union between us, young man, with all my soul I pledge you.' Long and deep was the draught with which the old man drained to its last drop the golden goblet; as he raised the cup to his lips I raised mine to do him honour, and as I did so I thought I heard some one mutter over my shoulder—'That is not wine.'

"I glanced round but there was no one from whom the sounds could have proceeded. I raised the cup once more, the crimson liquid foamed up towards my lips, a slight sensation of giddy sickness passed over me as I lifted the vessel, and the same voice, real or imagined, whispered sharply in my ear the startling words—'But the *blood*, which is the life of it, thou shalt not eat.' Horrified I dropped the cup upon the floor, and whatever was the liquor which it contained, it was every drop shed upon the ground. The old man when this happened was still engaged in his deep potation, and did not perceive the accident, or if he did, he certainly did not pretend to do so. He wiped his mouth and rose from the table; he motioned me to be still, and kneeling upon the ground with his face toward the hidden part of the chamber, he continued apparently in long and earnest devotion, stretching his hands forth with many gestures of vehement entreaty. As he did so, the surface of the cloudy barrier became agitated, strange lights and shadows flitted over it; sometimes tracing in the eddying vapours wild ghastly features, which vanished almost as soon as they appeared, and sometimes dimly showing monstrous shapes, and now and then more faintly-traced forms of surpassing grace—all gliding and wheeling, appearing and melting away, separating and mingling like the endless shiftings of a wondrous dream. At length there came a low and marvellously sweet sound of far-off music, like holy choirs singing a wild requiem over the dead; the sound stole floating along, sometimes broken and disordered, as though the untutored wind swept at random through the chords of a thousand-stringed instrument, then again, coming with perfect harmony and unspeakable melody over the senses, until once more the music would lose itself in the wild burst of the wailing wind. Still, however, minute after minute these fitful wanderings of the melody grew less and less, and the music breathed on, louder and more clear, in sweet but unearthly order. As these wondrous sounds rose on the ear, I beheld in the cloudy curtain, at first so dimly traced that my eye lost it every moment, but gradually becoming more fixed and discernible, the shadowy semblance of a female form, wrapt in a thin mantle, and as it seemed of beauty more than human. This form, at first traced only in the faintest discernible shadow, grew gradually more and more clearly defined, until at length the outline became fixed, and the colours, and lights, and shadows, after some uncertain flittings to and fro, clearly developed themselves, and thus little by little, without my being able to remember at which point the transition had taken place, I beheld what had first been no more than the lightest shadow upon a fleeting vapour now stand before me in corporeal substance—a model of preternatural loveliness in limb and feature, but pale and bloodless as the dead. The old man arose, and stepping sadly and reverently to her, he took the small hand which hung languidly by her side, and led her slowly towards the table. The beautiful form moved lightly over the floor, but seemingly without more volition or purpose of its own than belongs to a mere automaton; the lips pale as marble, the eyes fixed and glittering, and every muscle of the perfect face still as death. He led her to a chair, and placing her in it, he took one of the large golden goblets, like that which he himself had just emptied, full of the dark red liquid, and putting its brim to her lips he poured every drop of its contents down her throat; he laid the vessel again in its place, and withdrawing to a little distance, he folded his arms, bowed his head downwards like one in deep dejection, and silently awaited the result. After two or three wild thrilling peals, the music gave place to utter silence, and at the same moment the glow of life spread itself gently over the face and limbs of the girl, and dyed her lips with the brightest crimson, the fixed glance of her eyes gave place to the soft fire of animation, and I beheld before me the breathing archetype of the portrait whose beauty had so enchanted me. I approached her—I spoke with her, her voice was melody such as fills the ear with ever-varying sweetness, and floods the heart with mysterious joy; an embodied dream of divine beauty—unspeakable grace in every the slightest movement, and absolute fascination in every look; the very mystery of her being but heightened the wild interest which wrapt every faculty of my soul: delighted wonder, love and awe, fear and rapture, filled all my heart with a sweet and terrible delirium of worship. I saw revealed before me a divinity, clothed in the eternal majesty of ideal beauty—that glorious mystery after which the heart of man has panted and toiled, and yearned, even since the world was young. I know not how the time went by, many hours seemed but as the dream of a minute; the spell was broken by the old man her father, who taking me by the hand led me away through the dark part of the chamber; the chill and darkness of the cold cloudy medium through which we walked fell like death upon my heart—a revulsion of horror unutterable succeeded; sickness of heart and terror were upon me. The fearful transition was, however, of short duration; an unseen arm thrust me forward, and when I recovered my equilibrium I found myself in the aisle of a church, crowded with listeners, and lighted with many lamps. A preacher, too, was loudly haranguing them from the pulpit. How I had entered the place I knew not; I stood in the centre of the church; my movements, however, had undoubtedly been somewhat abrupt.

"'Sir,' exclaimed a bull-necked, red-faced burgher, with an indignant scowl, 'if you must make a row, you had better do it at the other side of the door. We came here to listen, not to be kicked and jostled.'

"'What the devil ails the young

gentleman?' cried another; 'he bolts and butts like a mad bull.'

"'You have broken my hat,' ejaculated a third.

"'And my back,' groaned a fourth.

"These and such like exclamations, accompanied with abundance of sour looks, were quite sufficient to assure me that my impetuous entrance at least was not an illusion. The church was that of —— one which I had often visited, and with all whose usual approaches I was thoroughly acquainted. I was therefore but the more puzzled and confounded in attempting to account to myself for my suddenly assumed position in the very centre of the congregation. This was, however, the least marvel in a day of wonders.

"Henceforward life had lost for me all interest. I had beheld loveliness which was not of this earth, beside the remembrance of which all that I had ever seen of beauty, either in nature or in art, seemed gross, insipid, and charmless. The comeliness of this world was no more for me; day and night the same thought haunted me—day and night one dream, from which it was agony to awaken, overspread my soul. I was unsocial, changed, spirit-stricken, night and morning, moving and living in the irresistible fascination of the same absorbing, yearning vision. Day after day, ay, and night after night, I traced the streets and lanes of the city in the hope of finding again the scene of my strange adventures—my searches were all in vain. I described the street, all its peculiarities, but no one could direct me to it, none had seen it. Still I wandered through the city with the almost hopeless object of meeting the old man—this hope was equally abortive—disappointment, still disappointment. I was miserable—my life was mere weariness. I wandered on, a stranger to the pleasures and to the interests of men; none knew of the unearthly passion which wasted me; I neither had nor wished to have a companion; mysteries had revealed themselves to me—mysteries which men could not behold and be happy. Hour after hour, day after day, week after week, wore on in one long, all-absorbing, unsatisfied wish. I knew that the beautiful being, the worship of whom was wearing me away, could not be of this world; but fear I had none respecting her; there was indeed awe, but no fear, no revulsion.

"I seldom slept, but when I did, my slumbers were broken by a thousand fantastic dreams, but all more or less horrible. In these visions the foreground was ever occupied by the beautiful subject of my waking thoughts; but darkly lurking in some obscure corner, or suddenly crossing my sight when I least remembered him, came the abhorred monk, searing away the lovely illusion, and startling me into broad wakefulness again. After such dreams, troubled and checkered with terror though they were, the strange passion, which had now become the essence of my being, would return upon me with redoubled vehemence; existence had become to me one fevered, unsatisfied wish—a burthen too heavy for me to bear. One morning I started from one of those visions which continually broke my rest; as I opened my eyes, I distinctly saw some dark shapeless thing glide like a snake from my pillow down the side of the bed, where I lost sight of it. Hardly knowing why, I sprang upon the floor, and to my unutterable horror I beheld peering from under the bed, the face of the demon monk. With a yell of despairing terror I howled; 'In God's name avaunt;' and clasping my hands over my eyes I stood fixed and freezing in an agony of horror, not daring to expose myself to the terrors of a second gaze. I stood locked in this tremendous catalepsy, until my servant entering the chamber more than an hour after, recalled me to myself.

"'I see it, I see it all,' thought I, as with the excitement of madness I paced up and down my chamber—'I know it, I am under the influence of Satan—in the power of the tormentor. Oh, God! oh, God! is there no passage of escape? is there no refuge from this Satanic persecution? Must I waste away in strength of body and in the faculties of my mind, until body and soul perish for ever?'

"Almost as I uttered this agonized appeal, a thought struck me as suddenly as if it had been suggested by another speaker—'Go present yourself to a priest; confess your sins in a penitent spirit, and he will give you good counsel in your present strait, and if on earth there be deliverance for you, it is thus.' The thought had hardly presented itself, when I put it into execution. I went to an aged and holy man and made my shrift, and on the imposition of a certain penance, he gave me absolution. I told him all I had suffered, and asked his advice under the peculiar and horrible case. Having heard me attentively, the good old man told me to be of good cheer.

"'My son,' said he, 'thou hast experienced one of those assaults of the evil one which we, who sit in the confessional, are often told of—ay, while the giddy unconscious world is scouting the very possibility of such things. Strangely, too, it is, that as in thy case, my child, it generally happens that those who come hither for counsel under such terrors as those which have so long haunted thee, are from among the gay fashionable votaries of pleasure, whose chief characteristic it is to lead the way in ridiculing all belief in such influences, and too often in covert derision of religion itself. Watch and pray, my son—by no consent of thine own invite the adversary; purify thy conscience by frequent confession; trust in the mercy of heaven; walk in the ways of life uprightly and humbly; mortify every foolish as well as every sinful desire; and if thou dost so, Satan will never possess thee, body or soul, in all time, hereafter for ever.'

"I returned much comforted and with singleness of heart; I endeavoured in all things to conform myself to the directions of the good priest, and thus day by day the delirium under which my rest, and strength, and faculties were declining, gradually melted away and almost disappeared.

"A month had passed away, and I had become in health and spirits like other men, my mind being now thoroughly released from its former wanderings. I entered at nightfall the church of ——. I knew not what feeling impelled me in the choice. There were but few worshippers in the church, and my thoughts, no doubt misled by the associations with which my last visit to this place was connected, wandered far away from the subject on which you will say they ought to have been fixed. My attention was, however, recalled to the scene before me by a circumstance which I shall not soon forget. Two figures caught my eye, as it seemed to me, that of a male and of a female, but both wrapt in mantles so ample as effectually to conceal the limbs, and quite to overshadow the features of those who wore them; both had drawn the hoods of their cloaks over their heads. The instant my eye encountered these figures, a sudden conviction flashed upon my mind that they were those of the very objects of the search which had for so long absorbed me. Every moment served to confirm this conviction; and when I saw them rise and pass from the church it was with a fearful interest that I too arose and followed them. They passed into the street, now nearly dark, I still closely dogging their steps: when they had arrived there, after a short pause they separated, moving rapidly in opposite directions; without hesitation I followed the lighter of the two figures, inwardly convinced that it was in truth no other than that of the being whom most of all I should have shunned and dreaded. Through many streets I followed the light gliding form, with a fascination too deep for words; with a blind obedience still I followed it, until it passed beyond the precincts of the city, and as the figure entered the broad fields, now sleeping under the misty light of the moon, I suffered the distance which separated us to increase, so far as to avoid the immediate likelihood of detection to which a near pursuit, though unremarked among the throng of the city streets, would, in this sequestered and open place, have exposed me. Cautiously and at some distance then I followed, until I saw the object of my curiosity pause under the boughs of some tall trees, and, throwing back the hood from her face, and suffering the cloak to fall upon the ground, seat herself gently upon a large grey stone which stood there, and crossing her arms pensively on her lap, gaze fixedly upward at the broad bright disc of the beautiful moon.

"I resolved now to ascertain the correctness of my suspicions; and resisting as well as I might the misgivings and fears which crossed my mind, I stole noiselessly along under the broad friendly shade of the majestic trees, beneath which she was seated. Under cover of some brushwood I crept noiselessly onward, until I had reached to within some ten or twelve steps of the mysterious figure. The countenance was raised a little; the dark silken hair, parted on the forehead, fell in luxuriant folds upon the white shoulders and heaving bosom of the beautiful being. I beheld the full lustrous eye beneath its long dark lashes, and the exquisite features all revealed in the pale light of the moon, and clothed in the witching tenderness of sadness. A single glance told me that I was not mistaken; the conviction smote upon my heart; for an instant its pulses were suspended, and a chill, like that of death, shot through my frame, and then through every artery the tingling life-blood sprang with a recoil as impetuous and sudden. It was she—the dreamed-of—the longed-for—the enchantress. I abandoned myself to the intoxication of the moment. With words of passionate madness I threw myself at her feet: she raised me up—her arms were around me.

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"Beautiful betrayer—passionately-beloved phantom—unearthly lover!—what have I done? I am a fear and wonder to myself. Are all thy tears and blushes a mockery, and can hell borrow the beauty and modesty of angels? Sweet terrible illusion, I will not curse thee: 'twas I—*I* and not thou who wooed these strange horrors—thou didst warn me—ay! fallen, lost for ever as thou wert, warn me in pity—with tears, and supplications, and shadowy threatenings implore and resist. Still night after night thy footsteps are my guide, thy smiles my life, thy bosom my pillow: the vital taper burns away—down, down, wasting in the fierce glare of fever. Where, where will end this agony of love and despair? Would to God that heart and brain were dust, so I might remember no more, and be at rest! But no, no, it may not be. Cruel, beautiful destroyer! thou wilt drink my life away sweetly, slowly, ever day by day. I am all thine own—heavier, heavier grows the dreary sleep. All men move around me strangers, and as far away from my world of existence as from the dimmest star that twinkles in the sky. I have but one companion, one interest, one object; ever within me dread and loathing wrestle against passionate love in eternal agony. Oh! God! whence art thou, beautiful destroyer? Thou wouldst not kill me for ever. There is pity—infinite pity—in thy words and looks—tenderness and sorrow ever in thy dark, soft, deadly eyes: thy sweet words, too, ever warning—ay! thou hast truly said. The grieved and vainly-resisting slave of others art thou—the unwilling thrall of agencies hated and feared, but from which never—never in time or eternity canst thou escape.

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"One evening, in the self same church, I saw the other figure stand with her again; I followed them forth, but vainly looked for her to separate from him when they had reached the street. Together the two figures walked quickly onward, I following. Twice or thrice she turned her head, and with hasty gestures stealthily warned me off. Still doggedly I pursued: they walked, I know not whither, through streets strange to me; and at length, like a dream, around me rose the objects which my memory had so carefully treasured—the dark, silent street whither the old man had led me months before—the long grass waving in the night breeze over the pavement—the dim, tall, mouldering palaces at both sides towering darkly against the deep blue sky of midnight, and all over-shone by the pale moon. The two shapes stopped by the self-same stone porch which had given me entrance to the habitation so terribly remembered. Like one in a dream, without fear or purpose, I stepped lightly to the gate before they entered. The old man (it was he) moved to meet me—bade me welcome a thousand times, and made me promise to come in with him. This I did eagerly, though I saw the girl who stood behind him wring her hands as if in sorrow. Glaring lights of many colours were streaming from the windows, and mirthful music, mixed with wild uproar like the mad gusts of a tempest, resounded from the distant chambers. Shadows too flitted and bounded across the casements. We entered the hall as before, the old man leading the way. As we moved around the girl whispered softly in my ear—'You are in mortal peril. For your soul's sake eat nothing—drink nothing; speak to no being whom you do not know, and say to me no word of love, or you perish everlastingly. They will have you. *He* (pointing to the old man) and a worse than he will torment you for ever. Guard every look and word; trust not in your own strength, but elsewhere; be not terrified by their mockeries, and when you can escape hence fly.'

" Still with a dull recklessness I followed the old man, and mounted with him a broad marble staircase. As we ascended, the sounds became louder and fiercer. Loud barbaric music, mingled with fierce bursts of maniac laughter—Bacchanalian shouts, and long-drawn yells, as it seemed of agony, along with the continuous shuffling and pounding of feet upon the floors, produced a combination of noises which few could have heard without terror. I paused for a moment at the door, and then, summoning my utmost resolution, I entered. The spectacle before me was one which, while consciousness remains, I can never forget. A vast chamber, lighted dazzlingly with a thousand lamps, or rather stars, for they were not supported nor suspended by any thing, but glowed, flickered, and sported, separate and self-sustained, rolling and eddying high in air—expanding, and contracting, and yielding in glorious succession all the most splendid colours which imagination can conceive. Beneath this gorgeous and ever-shifting illumination a vast throng of shapes were moving—all enacting, but with a repulsive and hideous exaggeration, the courteous observances and jollity of a festive meeting. Some glided to and fro with courtly ease, but bearing upon their lifeless faces the fearful stamp of sin and eternal anguish; others sate looking on, their fixed features writhed into smiles which, but to dream of, would appal the fancy for days; others, with ghastly idiotic grimaces, made hideous music from strange instruments, which panted and quivered, and writhed like living things in agony; others leaped, and danced, and howled, and glared like the very fiends of madness; and all formed a crowd of such terrific and ghastly horror as words cannot even faintly shadow forth. I felt like one under the enchantment of opium: I feared nothing: I revelled in the horrors among which I was plunged: an intoxication too strong for body and mind was upon me. Among these appalling and tremendous sights I beheld close by me, with fierce rapture, the beautiful form of the mysterious being who had won my very soul. I spoke I know not what words of passion, and she, with grief and horror in her face, said softly to me—

" ' Speak to me no more of love, as you would save your soul alive. In sin and sorrow my lot is fixed for ever. Beware how you court me here. I strive to save you. We are not all alike. I am not as these: I have mercy: I would deliver you: but these are stronger than I. The adversary has called me from my mournful dreams to work his will. They will have you—they will have you. Know you who they are?'

" I spoke again, I know not what. ' Beware—once more beware,' said she softly. ' See you not that these are in torment and hatred? You know what they are. If you regard not my counsel you will be among them, and of them in eternity. You are in mortal peril—beware.'

" Again, in wayward madness, I spoke—

" ' The time draws nigh,' said she, while death-paleness overspread her cheeks. ' I foresaw this. I dreaded it. The time draws nigh—my mission will be ended. They will let me go to my quiet; but you they will possess and keep in the bondage of hell—in hatred and agony for ever and ever. It is too late now. You have spoken the word. I am going hence, where you will see me no more.'

" As she thus spoke, a cloudy indistinctness overspread the pale beautiful vision, and she began slowly and mournfully to recede from me. Stung with horror and agony at the sight, I cast myself before the fading form.

" ' Stay, stay, beautiful, beloved illusion,' I said; ' leave me not, oh, leave me not alone—I can love none other—I am your slave, your worshipper—I am yours for ever—God be my witness.'

" As I ended the sentence, a yelling crash like the roar of ten thousand gigantic bells stunned my ears—total darkness swallowed every object, and my senses forsook me.

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"I was found in the morning by the sexton of ——, senseless, bruised, and covered with blood and foam, lying in the great aisles of that building. Since then I have been, *you* will say, mad—*I* say, the sport of other souls than my own—a blind, desperate instrument of hell, wending onward to an eternal doom which no imaginable power can avert. This consciousness of inevitable fate has been my companion ever since then, and it has taught me to despise opinion, virtue, vice—to trample on religion, and to laugh at punishment.

"Satan, whose I am, had chosen me for himself, to do his work even from the first. I am one with him, and he with me; and when I die, will merge for ever into that dark mind. Think you, then, I care whether death come to-day, or to-morrow, or the next day? It must arrive soon; and then——

"Now, father, I have confessed enough, and you are welcome to tell my shrift to all the world. Absolve me now; and if you send me to heaven, I'll give you credit for a wonder-worker when we meet."

So saying, he laughed loud and bitterly.

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He is to die to-morrow in the Place of St. Mark. They are building the scaffold. All are anxious to see the celebrated bravo and bandit.

They say that he has killed more than two hundred men in various broils and actions with his own hand. The caitiff mob of Venice admires the gigantic ruffian.

"Spalatro," say they, "was a great man—a grand robber—a tremendous bravo. There will not soon again be such another dagger in Venice."

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It is over—the axe has fallen—the wretched sinner has passed from the world he so much abused. He spoke to the people from the scaffold, but all in mockery and jibes. The giddy crowd applauded him. When he had done speaking, and before the executioner was ready, of a sudden, and for the last time, a fit seized him; he cried out with a loud voice. The devil cast him down, and tore him. While he lay struggling on the planks the signal was made, and at two blows the head was severed from the body.

Thus ends the narrative of honest Giacamo. Whether or not he believed the tale I cannot tell: he certainly wrote it carefully out from end to end in his fair tall hand. For myself, I have little doubt that the story contains a pretty accurate detail of the successive attacks of *delirium tremens* which the drunken excesses of the wretch Spalatro were calculated to induce; for it is but giving the devil his due to admit, that it is not his usual practice to have young men to supper with a view to get off his daughters. I confess, too, that, under all the circumstances, I am strongly inclined to think that "the *old man*" who figures in the foregoing narrative, (and whom I take to be identical with the *old boy.*) ought to have consummated his persecution of the poor highwayman by an action for breach of promise of marriage, which would certainly lie in such a case. Perhaps, however, the devil showed his good sense in preferring his own fireside to venturing into our courts of law for a remedy. However, my dear Harry, joke as we may, it is not easy, no nor possible, altogether to extract from the mind its inborn affection for the marvellous. Philosophy does but teach us the extent of our ignorance (I think I saw that somewhere or other before, but no matter). Do the dead return from the grave? Do strange influences reveal to mortal eye the shadowy vistas of futurity? Can demoniac agencies possess the body as of old, and blast the mind? What are these things that we call spectral illusions, dreams, madness? All around us is darkness and uncertainty. To what thing shall we say I understand thee? All is doubt—all is mystery; in short, in the words of our poetic countrymen—"It's all botheration from bottom to top."

Yours faithfully, though far away,

THE TRANSLATOR.

THE WATCHER.

FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF A BACHELOR.

It is now more than fifty years since the occurrences which I am about to relate caused a strange sensation in the gay society of Dublin. The fashionable world, however, is no recorder of traditions—the memory of selfishness seldom reaches far—and the events which occasionally disturb the polite monotony of its pleasant and heartless progress, however stamped with the characters of misery and horror, scarcely ever outlive the gossip of a season; and, except perhaps in the remembrance of a few more directly interested in the consequences of the catastrophe, are in a little time lost to the recollection of all. The appetite for scandal, or for horror, has been sated—the incident can yield no more of interest or of novelty—curiosity, frustrated by impenetrable mystery, gives over the pursuit in despair—the tale has ceased to be new, grows stale and flat—and so, in a few years, inquiry subsides into indifference, and all is forgotten.

I was a young man at the time, and intimately acquainted with some of the actors in this strange tale; the impression which its incidents made upon me, therefore, were deep and lasting. I shall now endeavour, with fulness and precision, to relate them all, combining, of course, in the narrative, whatever I have learned from various sources, tending, however imperfectly, to illuminate the darkness which involves its progress and termination.

Somewhere about the year 1794, the younger brother of a certain baronet, whom I shall call Sir James Barton, returned to Dublin. He had served in the navy with some distinction, having commanded one of his majesty's frigates during the greater part of the American war. Captain Barton was now apparently some two or three-and-forty years of age. He was an intelligent and agreeable companion, when he pleased it, though generally reserved, and occasionally even moody. In society, however, he deported himself as a man of the world, and a gentleman. He had not contracted any of the noisy brusqueness sometimes acquired at sea; on the contrary, his manners were remarkably easy, quiet, and even polished. He was in person about the middle size, and somewhat strongly formed—his countenance was marked with the lines of thought, and on the whole wore an expression of gravity and even of melancholy; being however, as we have said, a man of perfect breeding, as well as of affluent circumstances and good family, he had, of course, ready access to the best society of the metropolis, without the necessity of any other credentials. In his personal habits Mr. Barton was unexpensive. He occupied lodgings in one of the *then* fashionable streets in the south side of the town—kept but one horse and one servant—and though a reputed free-thinker, yet lived an orderly and moral life—indulging neither in gaming, drinking, nor any other vicious pursuit—living very much to himself, without forming any intimacies, or choosing any companions, and appearing to mix in gay society rather for the sake of its bustle and distraction, than for any opportunities which it offered of interchanging either thoughts or feelings with its votaries. Barton was therefore pronounced a saving, prudent, unsocial sort of a fellow, who bid fair to maintain his celibacy alike against stratagem and assault, and was likely to live to a good old age, die rich, and leave his money to an hospital.

It was soon apparent, however, that the nature of Mr. Barton's plans had been totally misconceived. A young lady, whom we shall call Miss Montague, was at this time introduced into the gay world of Dublin, by her aunt, the Dowager Lady L——. Miss Montague was decidedly pretty and accomplished, and having some natural cleverness, and a great deal of gaiety, became for a while a reigning toast. Her popularity, however, gained her, for a time, nothing more than that unsubstantial admiration which, however pleasant as an incense to vanity, is by no means necessarily antecedent to matrimony—for, unhappily for the young lady in question, it was an understood thing, that beyond her personal attractions, she had no kind of earthly provision. Such being the state of affairs, it will readily be believed that no little surprise was consequent upon the appearance of Captain Barton as the avowed lover of the penniless Miss Montague.

His suit prospered, as might have been expected, and in a short time it was confidentially communicated by old Lady L—— to each of her hundred-and-fifty particular friends in succession, that Captain Barton had actually tendered proposals of marriage, with her approbation, to her niece, Miss Montague, who had, moreover, accepted the offer of his hand, conditionally upon the consent of her father, who was then upon his homeward voyage from India, and expected in two or three months at furthest. About this consent there could be no doubt—the delay, therefore, was one merely of form—they were looked upon as absolutely engaged, and Lady L——, with a rigour of old-fashioned decorum with which her niece would, no doubt, gladly have dispensed, withdrew her thenceforward from all further participation in the gaieties of the town. Captain Barton was a constant visitor, as well as a frequent guest at the house, and was permitted all the privileges of intimacy which a betrothed suitor is usually accorded. Such was the relation of parties, when the mysterious circumstances which darken this narrative with inexplicable melancholy, first begun to unfold themselves.

Lady L—— resided in a handsome mansion at the north side of Dublin, and Captain Barton's lodgings, as we have already said, were situated at the south. The distance intervening was considerable, and it was Captain Barton's habit generally to walk home without an attendant, as often as he passed the evening with the old lady and her fair charge. His shortest way in such nocturnal walks, lay, for a considerable space, through a line of street which had as yet been merely laid out, and little more than the foundations of the houses constructed. One night, shortly after his engagement with Miss Montague had commenced, he happened to remain unusually late, in company only with her and Lady L——. The conversation had turned upon the evidences of revelation, which he had disputed with the callous scepticism of a confirmed infidel. What were called "French principles," had in those days found their way a good deal into fashionable society, especially that portion of it which professed allegiance to Whiggism, and neither the old lady nor her charge were so perfectly free from the taint, as to look upon Mr. Barton's views as any serious objection to the proposed union. The discussion had degenerated into one upon the supernatural and the marvellous, in which he had pursued precisely the same line of argument and ridicule. In all this, it is but truth to state, Captain Barton was guilty of no affectation—the doctrines upon which he insisted, were, in reality, but too truly the basis of his own fixed belief, if so it might be called; and perhaps not the least strange of the many strange circumstances connected with this narrative, was the fact, that the subject of the fearful influences we are about to describe, was himself, from the deliberate conviction of years, an utter disbeliever in what are usually termed preternatural agencies.

It was considerably past midnight when Mr. Barton took his leave, and set out upon his solitary walk homeward. He had now reached the lonely road, with its unfinished dwarf walls tracing the foundations of the projected rows of houses on either side—the moon was shining mistily, and its imperfect light made the road he trod but additionally dreary—that utter silence which has in it something indefinably exciting, reigned there, and made the sound of his steps, which alone broke it, unnaturally loud and distinct. He had proceeded thus some way, when he on a sudden heard other footfalls, pattering at a measured pace, and, as it seemed, about two score steps behind him. The suspicion of being dogged is at all times unpleasant; it is, however, especially so in a spot so desolate and lonely; and this suspicion became so strong in the mind of Captain Barton, that he abruptly turned about to confront his pursuers, but, though there was quite sufficient moonlight to disclose any object upon the road he had traversed, no form of any kind was visible there. The steps he had heard could not have been the reverberation of his own, for he stamped his foot upon the ground, and walked briskly up and down, in the vain attempt to awake an echo; though by no means a fanciful person, therefore he was at last fain to charge the sounds upon his imagination, and treat them as an illusion. Thus satisfying himself, he resumed his walk, and before he had proceeded a dozen paces, the mysterious footfalls were again audible from behind, and this time, as if with the special design of showing that the sounds were not the responses of an echo—the steps sometimes slackened nearly to a halt, and sometimes hurried for six or eight strides to a run, and again abated to a walk. Captain Barton, as before, turned suddenly round, and with the same result—no object was visible above the deserted level of the road. He walked back over the same ground, determined that, whatever might have been the cause of the sounds which had so disconcerted him, it should not escape his search—the endeavour, however, was unrewarded. In spite of all his scepticism, he felt something like a superstitious fear stealing fast upon him, and with these unwonted and uncomfortable sensations, he once more turned and pursued his way. There was no repetition of these haunting sounds, until he had reached the point where he had last stopped to retrace his steps—here they were resumed—and with sudden starts of running, which threatened to bring the unseen pursuer close up to the alarmed pedestrian. Captain Barton arrested his course as formerly—the unaccountable nature of the occurrence filled him with vague and horrible sensations—and yielding to the excitement he felt gaining upon him, he shouted sternly, "Who goes there?" The sound of one's own voice, thus exerted, in utter solitude, and followed by total silence, has in it something unpleasantly exciting, and he felt a degree of nervousness which, perhaps, from no cause had he ever known before. To the very end of this solitary street the steps pursued him—and it required a strong effort of stubborn pride on his part, to resist the impulse that prompted him every moment to run for safety at the top of his speed. It was not until he had reached his lodging, and sate by his own fire-side, that he felt sufficiently reassured to rearrange and reconsider in his own mind the occurrences which had so discomposed him. So little a matter, after all, is sufficient to upset the pride of scepticism and vindicate the old simple laws of nature within us.

Mr. Barton was next morning sitting at a late breakfast, reflecting upon the incidents of the previous night, with more of inquisitiveness than awe, so speedily do gloomy impressions upon the fancy disappear under the cheerful influences of day, when a letter just delivered by the postman was placed upon the table before him. There was nothing remarkable in the address of this missive, except that it was written in a hand which he did not know—perhaps it was disguised—for the tall narrow characters were sloped backward; and with the self-inflicted suspense which we so often see practised in such cases, he puzzled over the inscription for a full minute before he broke the seal. When he did so, he read the following words, written in the same hand:—

"Mr. Barton, late captain of the 'Dolphin,' is warned of DANGER. He will do wisely to avoid —— street—[here the locality of his last night's adventure was named]—if he walks there as usual he will meet with something bad—let him take warning, once for all, for he has good reason to dread
"THE WATCHER."

Captain Barton read and re-read this strange effusion; in every light and in every direction he turned it over and over; he examined the paper on which it was written, and scrutinized the hand-writing even more. Defeated here, he turned to the seal; it was nothing but a patch of wax, upon which the accidental impression of a coarse thumb was imperfectly visible. There was not the slightest mark, no clue or indication of any kind, to lead him to even a guess as to its possible origin. The writer's object seemed a friendly one, and yet he subscribed himself as one whom he had "good reason to dread." Altogether the letter, its author, and its real purpose, were to him an inexplicable puzzle, and one, moreover, unpleasantly suggestive, in his mind, of associations connected with his last night's adventure.

In obedience to some feeling—perhaps of pride—Mr. Barton did not communicate, even to his intended bride, the occurrences which we have just detailed. Trifling as they might appear, they had in reality most disagreeably affected his imagination, and he cared not to disclose, even to the young lady in question, what she might possibly look upon as evidences of weakness. The letter might very well be but a hoax, and the mysterious footfall but a delusion of his fancy. But although he affected to treat the whole affair as unworthy of a thought, it yet haunted him pertinaciously, tormenting him with perplexing doubts, and depressing him with undefined apprehensions. Certain it is, that for a considerable time afterwards he carefully avoided the street indicated in the letter as the scene of danger.

It was not until about a week after the receipt of the letter which I have transcribed, that anything further occurred to remind Captain Barton of its contents, or to counteract the gradual disappearance from his mind of the disagreeable impressions which he had then received. He was returning one night, after the interval I have stated, from the theatre, which was then situated in Crow-street, and having there handed Miss Montague and Lady L—— into their carriage, he loitered for some time with two or three acquaintances. With these, however, he parted close to the college, and pursued his way alone. It was now fully one o'clock, and the streets quite deserted. During the whole of his walk with the companions from whom he had just parted, he had been at times painfully aware of the sound of steps, as it seemed, dogging them on their way. Once or twice he had looked back, in the uneasy anticipation that he was again about to experience the same mysterious annoyances which had so much disconcerted him a week before, and earnestly hoping that he might *see* some form from whom the sounds might naturally proceed. But the street was deserted—no form was visible. Proceeding now quite alone upon his homeward way, he grew really nervous and uncomfortable, as he became sensible, with increased distinctness, of the well-known and now absolutely dreaded sounds.

By the side of the dead wall which bounded the college park, the sounds followed, re-commencing almost simultaneously with his own steps. The same unequal pace—sometimes slow, sometimes for a score yards or so, quickened to a run—was audible from behind him. Again and again he turned; quickly and stealthily he glanced over his shoulder—almost at every half-dozen steps; but no one was visible. The horrors of this intangible and unseen persecution became gradually all but intolerable; and when at last he reached his home, his nerves were strung to such a pitch of excitement that he could not rest, and did not attempt even to lie down until after the day-light had broken.

He was awakened by a knock at his chamber-door, and his servant entering, handed him several letters which had just been received by the penny post. One among them instantly arrested his attention—a single glance at the direction aroused him thoroughly. He at once recognized its character, and read as follows:—

"You may as well think, Captain Barton, to escape from your own shadow as from me; do what you may, I will see you as often as I please, and you shall see me, for I do not want to hide myself, as you fancy. Do not let it trouble your rest, Captain Barton; for, with a *good conscience*, what need you fear from the eye of

"THE WATCHER."

It is scarcely necessary to dwell upon the feelings elicited by a perusal of this strange communication. Captain Barton was observed to be unusually absent and out of spirits for several days afterwards; but no one divined the cause. Whatever he might think as to the phantom steps which followed him, there could be no possible illusion about the letters he had received; and, to say the least of it, their immediate sequence upon the mysterious sounds which had haunted him, was an odd coincidence. The whole circumstance was, in his own mind, vaguely and instinctively connected with certain passages in his past life, which, of all others, he hated to remember. It happened, however, that in addition to his own approaching nuptials, Captain Barton had just then—fortunately, perhaps, for himself—some business of an engrossing kind connected with the adjustment of a large and long-litigated claim upon certain properties. The hurry and excitement of business had its natural effect in gradually dispelling the marked gloom which had for a time occasionally oppressed him, and in a little while his spirits had entirely resumed their accustomed tone.

During all this time, however, he was occasionally dismayed by indistinct and half-heard repetitions of the same annoyance, and that in lonely places, in the day-time as well as after nightfall. These renewals of the strange impressions from which he had suffered so much, were, however, desultory and faint, insomuch that often he really could not, to his own satisfaction, distinguish between them and the mere suggestions of an excited imagination. One evening he walked down to the House of Commons with a member, an acquaintance of his and mine. This was one of the few occasions upon which I have been in company with Captain Barton. As we walked down together, I observed that he became absent and silent, and to a degree so marked as scarcely to consist with good breeding, and which, in one who was obviously, in all his habits, perfectly a gentleman, seemed to argue the pressure of some urgent and absorbing anxiety. I afterwards learned that, during the whole of our walk, he had heard the well-known footsteps dogging him as we proceeded. This, however, was the last time he suffered from this phase of the persecution, of which he was already the anxious victim. A new and a very different one was about to be presented.

Of the new series of impressions which were afterwards gradually to work out his destiny, I that evening witnessed the first; and but for its relation to the train of events which followed, the incident would scarcely have been now remembered by me. As we were walking in at the passage, a man, of whom I remember only that he was short in stature, looked like a foreigner, and wore a kind of travelling-cap, walked very rapidly, and as if under some fierce excitement, directly toward us, muttering to himself, fast and vehemently the while. This odd-looking person walked straight toward Barton, who was foremost of the three, and halted, regarding him for a moment or two with a look of menace and fury almost maniacal; and then turning about as abruptly, he walked before us at the same agitated pace, and disappeared at a side passage. I do distinctly remember being a good deal shocked at the countenance and bearing of this man, which indeed irresistibly impressed me with an undefined sense of danger, such as I have never felt before or since from the presence of anything human; but these sensations were, on my part, far from amounting to anything so disconcerting as to flurry or excite me—I had seen only a singularly evil countenance, agitated, as it seemed, with the excitement of madness. I was absolutely astonished, however, at the effect of this apparition upon Captain Barton. I knew him to be a man of proud courage and coolness in real danger—a circumstance which made his conduct upon this occasion the more conspicuously odd. He recoiled a step or two as the stranger advanced, and clutched my arm in silence, with what seemed to me to be a spasm of agony or terror; and then, as the figure disappeared, shoving me roughly back, he followed it for a few paces, stopped in great disorder, and sat down upon a form. I never beheld a countenance more ghastly and haggard.

"For God's sake, Barton, what is the matter?" said ——, our companion, really alarmed at his appearance. "You're not hurt, are you?—or unwell? What is it?"

"What did he say?—I did not hear it—what was it?" asked Barton, wholly disregarding the question.

"Tut, tut—nonsense," said ——, greatly surprised; "who cares what the fellow said. You are unwell, Barton—decidedly unwell; let me call a coach."

"Unwell! Yes—no—not exactly unwell," he said, evidently making an effort to recover his self-possession; "but, to say the truth, I am fatigued—a little over-worked—and perhaps over anxious. You know I have been in chancery, and the winding up of a suit is always a nervous affair. I have felt uncomfortable all this evening; but I am better now. Come, come—shall we go on?"

"No, no. Take my advice, Barton, and go home; you really do need rest; you are looking absolutely ill. I really do insist on your allowing me to see you home," replied his friend.

I seconded ——'s advice, the more readily as it was obvious that Barton was not himself disinclined to be persuaded. He left us, politely declining our offered escort. I was not sufficiently intimate with —— to discuss the scene which we had both just witnessed, and in which his friend had appeared in so strange a light. I was, however, convinced, from his manner in the few common-place comments and regrets which we exchanged, that he was just as little satisfied as I with the extempore plea of illness with which he had accounted for the strange exhibition, and that we were both agreed in suspecting some lurking mystery in the matter.

I called next day at Barton's lodgings, to inquire for him, and learned from the servant that he had not left his room since his return the night before; but that he was not seriously indisposed, and hoped to be out again in a few days. That evening he sent for Doctor R——, then in large and fashionable practice in Dublin, and their interview was, it is said, an odd one.

He entered into a detail of his own symptoms in an abstracted and desultory kind of way, which seemed to argue a strange want of interest in his own cure, and, at all events, made it manifest that there was some topic engaging his mind of more engrossing importance than his present ailment. He complained of occasional palpitations, and head-ache. Doctor R—— asked him, among other questions, whether there was any irritating circumstance or anxiety then occupying his thoughts. This he denied quickly and almost peevishly; and the physician thereupon declared it his opinion, that there was nothing amiss except some slight derangement of the digestion, for which he accordingly wrote a prescription, and was about to withdraw, when Mr. Barton, with the air of a man who suddenly recollects a topic which had nearly escaped him, recalled him.

"I beg your pardon, doctor, but I had really almost forgot; will you permit me to ask you two or three medical questions—rather odd ones, perhaps, but as a wager depends upon their solution, you will, I hope, excuse my unreasonableness."

The physician readily undertook to satisfy the inquirer.

Barton seemed to have some difficulty about opening the proposed interrogatories, for he was silent for a minute, then walked to his book-case, and returned as he had gone; at last he sat down, and said—

"You'll think them very childish questions, but I can't recover my wager without a decision; so I must put them. I want to know first about lock-jaw. If a man actually has had that complaint, and appears to have died of it—so much so, that a physician of average skill pronounces him actually dead—may he, after all, recover?"

The physician smiled, and shook his head.

"But—but a blunder may be made," resumed Barton. "Suppose an ignorant pretender to medical skill; may *he* be so deceived by any stage of the complaint, as to mistake what is only a part of the progress of the disease, for death itself?"

"No one who had ever seen death," answered he, "could mistake it in a case of lock-jaw."

Barton mused for a few minutes. "I am going to ask you a question, perhaps, still more childish; but first, tell me, are not the regulations of foreign hospitals, such as that of, let us say, ————, very lax and bungling. May not all kinds of blunders and slips occur in their entries of names, and soforth?"

Doctor R—— professed his incompetence to answer that query.

"Well, then, doctor, here is the last of my questions. You will, probably, laugh at it; but it must out, nevertheless. Is there any disease, in all the range of human maladies, which would have the effect of perceptibly contracting the stature, and the whole frame—causing the man to shrink in all his proportions, and yet to preserve his exact resemblance to himself in every particular—with the one exception, his height and bulk; *any* disease, mark—no matter how rare—how little believed in, generally—which could possibly result in producing such an effect?"

The physician replied with a smile, and a very decided negative.

"Tell me, then," said Barton, abruptly, "if a man be in reasonable fear of assault from a lunatic who is at large, can he not procure a warrant for his arrest and detention?"

"Really, that is more a lawyer's question than one in my way," replied Doctor R——; "but I believe, on applying to a magistrate, such a course would be directed."

The physician then took his leave; but, just as he reached the hall-door, remembered that he had left his cane up stairs, and returned. His reappearance was awkward, for a piece of paper, which he recognized as his own prescription, was slowly burning upon the fire, and Barton sitting close by with an expression of settled gloom and dismay. Doctor R—— had too much tact to appear to observe what presented itself; but he had seen quite enough to assure him that the mind, and not the body, of Captain Barton was in reality the seat of suffering.

A few days afterwards, the following advertisement appeared in the Dublin newspapers:—

> "If Sylvester Yelland, formerly a foremast-man on board his Majesty's frigate Dolphin, or his nearest of kin, will apply to Mr. Robert Smith, solicitor, at his office, Dame-street, he or they may hear of something greatly to his or their advantage. Admission may be had at any hour up to twelve o'clock at night, for the next fortnight, should parties desire to avoid observation; and the strictest secrecy, as to all communications intended to be confidential, shall be honourably observed."

The Dolphin, as I have mentioned, was the vessel which Captain Barton had commanded; and this circumstance, connected with the extraordinary exertions made by the circulation of hand-bills, &c., as well as by repeated advertisements, to secure for this strange notice the utmost possible publicity, suggested to Doctor R—— the idea that Captain Barton's extreme uneasiness was somehow connected with the individual to whom the advertisement was addressed, and he himself the author of it. This, however, it is needless to add, was no more than a conjecture. No information whatsoever, as to the real purpose of the advertisement itself, was divulged by the agent, nor yet any hint as to who his employer might be.

Mr. Barton, although he had latterly begun to earn for himself the character of a hypochondriac, was yet very far from deserving it. Though by no means lively, he had yet, naturally, what are termed "even spirits," and was not subject to undue depressions. He soon, therefore, began to return to his former habits; and one of the earliest symptoms of this healthier tone of spirits was, his appearing at a grand dinner of the Freemasons, of which worthy fraternity he was himself a brother. Barton, who had been at first gloomy and abstracted, drank much more freely than was his wont—possibly with the purpose of dispelling his own secret anxieties—and under the influence of good wine, and pleasant company, became gradually (unlike his usual *self*) talkative, and even noisy. It was under this unwonted excitement that he left his company at about half-past ten o'clock; and, as conviviality is a strong incentive to gallantry, it occurred to him to proceed forthwith to Lady L——'s, and pass the remainder of the evening with her and his destined bride.

Accordingly, he was soon at —— street, and chatting gaily with the ladies. It is not to be supposed that Capt. Barton had exceeded the limits which propriety prescribes to good fellowship—he had merely taken enough wine to raise his spirits, without, however, in the least degree unsteadying his mind, or affecting his manners. With this undue elevation of spirits had supervened an entire oblivion or contempt of those undefined apprehensions which had for so long weighed upon his mind, and to a certain extent estranged him from society; but as the night wore away, and his artificial gaiety began to flag, these painful feelings gradually intruded themselves again, and he grew abstracted and anxious as heretofore. He took his leave at length, with an unpleasant foreboding of some coming mischief, and with a mind haunted with a thousand mysterious apprehensions, such as, even while he acutely felt their pressure, he, nevertheless, inwardly strove, or affected to contemn.

It was this proud defiance of what he considered as his own weakness, which prompted him upon the present occasion to that course which brought about the adventure which we are now about to relate. Mr. Barton might have easily called a coach, but he was conscious that his strong inclination to do so proceeded from no cause other than what he desperately persisted in representing to himself to be his own superstitious tremors. He might also have returned home by a *route* different from that against which he had been warned by his mysterious correspondent; but for the same reason he dismissed this idea also, and with a dogged and half desperate resolution to force matters to a crisis of some kind, if there were any reality in the causes of his former suffering, and if not, satisfactorily to bring their delusiveness to the proof, he determined to follow precisely the course which he had trodden upon the night so painfully memorable in his own mind as that on which his strange persecution had commenced. Though, sooth to say, the pilot who for the first time steers his vessel under the muzzles of a hostile battery, never felt his resolution more severely tasked than did Captain Barton as he breathlessly pursued this solitary path—a path which, spite of every effort of scepticism and reason, he felt to be infested by some (as respected *him*) malignant influence.

He pursued his way steadily and rapidly, scarcely breathing from intensity of suspense; he, however, was troubled by no renewal of the dreaded footsteps, and was beginning to feel a return of confidence, as more than three-fourths of the way being accomplished with impunity, he approached the long line of twinkling oil lamps which indicated the frequented streets. This feeling of self-gratulation was, however, but momentary. The report of a musket at some two hundred yards behind him, and the whistle of a bullet close to his head, disagreeably and startlingly dispelled it. His first impulse was to retrace his steps in pursuit of the assassin; but the road on either side was, as we have said, embarrassed by the foundations of a street, beyond which extended waste fields, full of rubbish and neglected lime and brick kilns, and all now as utterly silent as though no sound had ever disturbed their dark and unsightly solitude. The futility of, single-handed, attempting, under such circumstances, a search for the murderer, was apparent, especially as no sound, either of retreating steps or otherwise, was audible to direct his pursuit.

With the tumultuous sensations of one whose life has just been exposed to a murderous attempt, and whose escape has been the narrowest possible, Captain Barton turned, and without, however, quickening his pace actually to a run, hurriedly pursued his way. He had turned, as we have said, after a pause of a few seconds, and had just commenced his rapid retreat, when on a sudden he met the well-remembered little man in the fur cap. The encounter was but momentary. The figure was walking at the same exaggerated pace, and with the same strange air of menace as before; and as it passed him, he thought he heard it say, in a furious whisper, "Still alive—still alive!"

The state of Mr. Barton's spirits began now to work a corresponding alteration in his health and looks, and to such a degree that it was impossible that the change should escape general remark. For some reasons, known but to himself, he took no step whatsoever to bring the attempt upon his life, which he had so narrowly escaped, under the notice of the authorities; on the contrary, he kept it jealously to himself; and it was not for many weeks after the occurrence that he mentioned it, and then in strict confidence, to a gentleman, whom the torments of his mind at last compelled him to consult.

Spite of his blue devils, however, poor Barton, having no satisfactory reason to render to the public for any undue remissness in the attentions which the relation subsisting between him and Miss Montague required, was obliged to exert himself, and present to the world a confident and cheerful bearing. The true source of his sufferings, and every circumstance connected with them, he guarded with a reserve so jealous, that it seemed dictated by at least a suspicion that the origin of his strange persecution was known to himself, and that it was of a nature which, upon his own account, he could not or dared not disclose.

The mind thus turned in upon itself, and constantly occupied with a haunting anxiety which it dared not reveal or confide to any human breast, became daily more excited, and, of course, more vividly impressible, by a system of attack which operated through the nervous system; and in this state he was destined to sustain, with increasing frequency, the stealthy visitations of that apparition which from the first had seemed to possess so unearthly and terrible a hold upon his imagination.

* * * * * *

It was about this time that Captain Barton called upon the then celebrated preacher, Dr.——, with whom he had a slight acquaintance, and an extraordinary conversation ensued. The divine was seated in his chambers in college, surrounded with works upon his favourite pursuit, and deep in theology, when Barton was announced. There was something at once embarrassed and excited in his manner, which, along with his wan and haggard countenance, impressed the student with the unpleasant consciousness that his visitor must have recently suffered terribly indeed, to account for an alteration so striking—almost shocking.

After the usual interchange of polite greeting, and a few common-place remarks, Captain Barton, who obviously perceived the surprise which his visit had excited, and which Doctor —— was unable wholly to conceal, interrupted a brief pause by remarking—

"This is a strange call, Doctor ——, perhaps scarcely warranted by an acquaintance so slight as mine with you. I should not under ordinary circumstances have ventured to disturb you; but my visit is neither an idle nor impertinent intrusion. I am sure you will not so account it, when ——"

Doctor —— interrupted him with assurances such as good breeding suggested, and Barton resumed—

"I am come to task your patience by asking your advice. When I say your patience, I might, indeed, say more; I might have said your humanity—your compassion; for I have been and am a great sufferer."

"My dear sir, replied the churchman, "it will, indeed, afford me infinite gratification if I can give you comfort in any distress of mind; but—but ——"

"I know what you would say," resumed Barton, quickly, ; "I am an unbeliever, and, therefore, incapable of deriving help from religion; but don't take that for granted. At least you must not assume that, however unsettled my convictions may be, I do not feel a deep—a very deep—interest in the subject. Circumstances have lately forced it upon my attention, in such a way as to compel me to review the whole question in a more candid and teachable spirit, I believe, than I ever studied it in before."

"Your difficulties, I take it for granted, refer to the evidences of revelation," suggested the clergyman.

"Why—no—yes; in fact I am ashamed to say I have not considered even my objections sufficiently to state them connectedly; but—but there is one subject on which I feel a peculiar interest."

He paused again, and Doctor —— pressed him to proceed.

"The fact is," said Barton, "whatever may be my uncertainty as to the authenticity of what we are taught to call revelation, of one fact I am deeply and horribly convinced, that there does exist beyond this a spiritual world—a system whose workings are generally in mercy hidden from us—a system which may be, and which is sometimes, partially and terribly revealed. I am sure—I *know*," continued Barton, with increasing excitement, "that there is a God—a dreadful God—and that retribution follows guilt. In ways the most mysterious and stupendous—by agencies the most inexplicable and terrific—there is a spiritual system—great God, how frightfully I have been convinced!—a system malignant, and implacable, and omnipotent, under whose persecutions I am, and have been, suffering the torments of the damned!—yes, sir—yes—the fires and frenzy of hell!"

As Barton spoke, his agitation became so vehement that the divine was shocked, and even alarmed. The wild and excited rapidity with which he spoke, and, above all, the indefinable horror which stamped his features, afforded a contrast to his ordinary cool and unimpassioned self-possession striking and painful in the last degree.

"My dear sir," said Doctor ——, after a brief pause, "I fear you have been suffering much, indeed; but I venture to predict that the depression under which you labour will be found to originate in purely physical causes, and that with a change of air, and the aid of a few tonics, your spirits will return, and the tone of your mind be once more cheerful and tranquil as heretofore. There was, after all, more truth than we are quite willing to admit in the classic theories which assigned the undue predominance of any one affection of the mind, to the undue action or torpidity of one or other of our bodily organs. Believe me, that a little attention to diet, exercise, and the other essentials of health, under competent direction, will make you as much yourself as you can wish."

"Doctor ——," said Barton, with something like a shudder, "I *cannot* delude myself with such a hope. I have no hope to cling to but one, and that is, that by some other spiritual agency more potent than that which tortures me, *it* may be combated, and I delivered. If this may not be, I am lost—now and for ever lost."

"But, Mr. Barton, you must remember," urged his companion, "that others have suffered as you have done, and ——"

"No, no, no," interrupted he, with irritability—"no, sir, I am not a credulous—far from a superstitious man. I have been, perhaps, too much the reverse—too sceptical, too slow of belief; but unless I were one whom no amount of evidence could convince, unless I were to contemn the repeated, the *perpetual* evidence of my own senses, I am now—now at last constrained to believe—I have no escape from the conviction—the overwhelming certainty—that I am haunted and dogged, go where I may, by—by a DEMON!"

There was an almost preternatural energy of horror in Barton's face, as, with its damp and deathlike lineaments turned towards his companion, he thus delivered himself.

"God help you, my poor friend," said Doctor ——, much shocked—God help you; for, indeed, you *are* a sufferer, however your sufferings may have been caused."

"Ay, ay, God help me," echoed Barton, sternly; "but *will* he help me—will he help me."

"Pray to him—pray in an humble and trusting spirit," said he.

"Pray, pray," echoed he again; "I can't pray—I could as easily move a mountain by an effort of my will. I have not belief enough to pray; there is something within me that will not pray. You prescribe impossibilities—literal impossibilities."

"You will not find it so, if you will but try," said Doctor ——.

"Try!—I *have* tried, and the attempt only fills me with confusion and terror; I have tried in vain, and more than in vain. The awful, unutterable idea of eternity and infinity oppresses and maddens my brain whenever my mind approaches the contemplation of the Creator; I recoil from the effort scared, confounded, terrified. I tell you, Doctor ——, if I am to be saved, it must be by other means. The idea of the Creator is to me intolerable—my mind cannot support it."

"Say, then, my dear sir," urged he—"say how you would have me serve you—what you would learn of me—what I can do or say to relieve you?"

"Listen to me first," replied Captain Barton, with a subdued air, and an evident effort to suppress his excitement—listen to me while I detail the circumstances of the terrible persecution under which my life has become all but intolerable—a persecution which has made me fear *death* and the world beyond the grave as much as I have grown to hate existence."

Barton then proceeded to relate the circumstances which we have already detailed, and then continued—

"This has now become habitual—an accustomed thing. I do not mean the actual seeing him in the flesh—thank God, *that* at least is not permitted daily. Thank God, from the unutterable horrors of that visitation I have been mercifully allowed intervals of repose, though none of security; but from the consciousness that a malignant spirit is following and watching me wherever I go, I have never, for a single instant, a temporary respite. I am pursued with blasphemies, cries of despair and appalling hatred. I hear those dreadful sounds called after me as I turn the corners of streets; they come in the night-time, while I sit in my chamber alone; they haunt me everywhere, charging me with hideous crimes, and—great God!—threatening me with coming vengeance and eternal misery. Hush!—do you hear *that!*" he cried with a horrible smile of triumph; "there—there, will that convince you?"

The clergyman felt the chillness of horror irresistibly steal over him, while, during the wail of a sudden gust of wind, he heard, or fancied he heard, the half articulate sounds of rage and derision mingling in the sough.

"Well, what do you think of *that?*" at length Barton cried, drawing a long breath through his teeth.

"I heard the wind," said Doctor ——. "What should I think of it—what is there remarkable about it?"

"The prince of the powers of the air," muttered Barton, with a shudder.

"Tut, tut! my dear sir," said the

student, with an effort to reassure himself; for though it was broad daylight, there was nevertheless something disagreeably contagious in the nervous excitement under which his visitor so obviously suffered. "You must not give way to those wild fancies; you must resist these impulses of the imagination."

"Ay, ay; 'resist the devil and he will flee from thee,'" said Barton, in the same tone; "but *how* resist him? ay, there it is—there is the rub. What—*what* am I to do? what *can* I do?"

"My dear sir, this is fancy," said the man of folios; "you are your own tormentor."

"No, no, sir—fancy has no part in it," answered Barton, somewhat sternly. "Fancy, forsooth! Was it that made *you*, as well as me, hear, but this moment, those appalling accents of hell? Fancy, indeed! No, no."

"But you have seen this person frequently," said the ecclesiastic;—"why have you not accosted or secured him? Is it not somewhat precipitate, to say no more, to assume, as you have done, the existence of preternatural agency, when, after all, everything may be easily accountable, if only proper means were taken to sift the matter."

"There are circumstances connected with this—this *appearance*," said Barton, "which it were needless to disclose, but which to *me* are proof of its horrible and unearthly nature. I know that the being who haunts me is not *man*—I say I *know* this; I could prove it to your own conviction." He paused for a minute, and then added, "And as to accosting it, I dare not, I could not; when I see it I am powerless; I stand in the gaze of death, in the triumphant presence of preterhuman power and malignity. My strength, and faculties, and memory all forsake me. O God, I fear, sir, you know not what you speak of. Mercy, mercy; heaven have pity on me!"

He leaned his elbow on the table, and passed his hand across his eyes, as if to exclude some image of horror, muttering the last words of the sentence he had just concluded, again and again.

"Doctor ——," he said, abruptly raising himself, and looking full upon the clergyman with an imploring eye, "I know you will do for me whatever may be done. You know now fully the circumstances and the nature of the mysterious agency of which I am the victim. I tell you I cannot help myself; I cannot hope to escape; I am utterly passive. I conjure you, then, to weigh my case well, and if anything may be done for me by vicarious supplication—by the intercession of the good—or by any aid or influence whatsoever, I implore of you, I adjure you in the name of the Most High, give me the benefit of that influence—deliver me from the body of this death. Strive for me, pity me; I know you will; you cannot refuse this; it is the purpose and object of my visit. Send me away with some hope, however little, some faint hope of ultimate deliverance, and I will nerve myself to endure, from hour to hour, the hideous dream into which my existence has been transformed."

Doctor —— assured him that all he could do was to pray earnestly for him, and that so much he would not fail to do. They parted with a hurried and melancholy valediction. Barton hastened to the carriage, which awaited him at the door, drew the blinds, and drove away, while Doctor —— returned to his chamber, to ruminate at leisure upon the strange interview which had just interrupted his studies.

It was not to be expected that Captain Barton's changed and eccentric habits should long escape remark and discussion. Various were the theories suggested to account for it. Some attributed the alteration to the pressure of secret pecuniary embarrassments; others to a repugnance to fulfil an engagement into which he was presumed to have too precipitately entered; and others, again, to the supposed incipiency of mental disease, which latter, indeed, was the most plausible, as well as the most generally received, of the hypotheses circulated in the gossip of the day.

From the very commencement of this change, at first so gradual in its advances, Miss Montague had of course been aware of it. The intimacy involved in their peculiar relation, as well as the near interest which it inspired, afforded, in her case, a like opportunity and motive for the successful exercise of that keen and penetrating observation peculiar to the sex. His visits became, at length, so interrupted, and his manner, while they lasted, so abstracted, strange, and agitated, that Lady L——, after hinting her anxiety and her suspicions more than once, at length distinctly stated her anxiety, and pressed for an explanation. The explanation was given, and although its nature at first relieved the worst solicitudes of the old lady and her niece, yet the circumstances which attended it, and the really dreadful consequences which it obviously indicated, as regarded the spirits, and indeed the reason of the now wretched man, who made the strange declaration, were enough, upon a little reflection, to fill their minds with perturbation and alarm.

General Montague, the young lady's father, at length arrived. He had himself slightly known Barton, some ten or twelve years previously, and being aware of his fortune and connexions, was disposed to regard him as an unexceptionable and indeed a most desirable match for his daughter. He laughed at the story of Barton's supernatural visitations, and lost not a moment in calling upon his intended son-in-law.

"My dear Barton," he continued, gaily, after a little conversation, "my sister tells me that you are a victim to blue devils, in quite a new and original shape."

Barton changed countenance, and sighed profoundly.

"Come, come; I protest this will never do," continued the general; "you are more like a man on his way to the gallows than to the altar. These devils have made quite a saint of you."

Barton made an effort to change the conversation.

"No, no, it won't do," said his visitor, laughing; "I am resolved to say out what I have to say upon this magnificent mock mystery of yours. Come, you must not be angry, but really it is too bad to see you, at your time of life, absolutely frightened into good behaviour, like a naughty child, by a bugaboo, and as far as I can learn, a very particularly contemptible one. Seriously, though, my dear Barton, I have been a good deal annoyed at what they tell me; but, at the same time, thoroughly convinced that there is nothing in the matter that may not be cleared up, with just a little attention and management, within a week at furthest."

"Ah, general, you do not know—" he began.

"Yes, but I do know quite enough to warrant my confidence," interrupted the soldier; "don't I know that all your annoyance proceeds from the occasional appearance of a certain little man in a cap and great-coat, with a red vest and a bad face, who follows you about, and pops upon you at the corners of lanes, and throws you into ague fits. Now, my dear fellow, I'll make it my business to *catch* this mischievous little mountebank, and either beat him into a jelly with my own hands, or have him whipped through the town, at the cart's-tail, before a month passes."

"If *you* knew what *I* know," said Barton, with gloomy agitation, "you would speak very differently. Don't imagine that I am so weak and foolish as to assume, without proof the most overwhelming, the conclusion to which I have been forced—the proofs are here, locked up here." As he spoke he tapped upon his breast, and with an anxious sigh continued to walk up and down the room.

"Well, well, Barton," said his visitor, "I'll wager a rump and dozen I collar the ghost, and convince yourself before many days are over."

He was running on in the same strain when he was suddenly arrested, and not a little shocked, by observing Barton, who had approached the window, stagger slowly back, like one who had received a stunning blow; his arm extended toward the street—his face and his very lips white as ashes—while he muttered, "There—there—there!"

General Montague started mechanically to his feet, and, from the window of the drawing-room, saw a figure corresponding, as well as his hurry would permit him to discern, with the description of the person, whose appearance so constantly and dreadfully disturbed the repose of his friend. The figure was just turning from the rails of the area upon which it had been leaning, and, without waiting to see more, the old gentleman snatched his cane and hat, and rushed down the stairs and into the street, in the furious hope of securing the person, and punishing the audacity of the mysterious stranger. He looked around him, but in vain, for any trace of the form he had himself distinctly beheld. He ran breathlessly to the nearest corner, expecting to see from thence the retreating figure, but no such form was visible. Back and forward, from crossing to crossing, he ran, at fault, and it was not until the curious gaze and laughing countenances of the passers-by reminded him of the absurdity of his pursuit, that he checked his hurried pace, lowered his walking-cane from the menacing altitude which he had mechanically given it, adjusted his hat, and walked composedly back again, inwardly vexed and flurried. He found Barton pale and trembling in every joint; they both remained silent, though under emotions very different. At last Barton whispered, "You saw it?"

"*It!*—him—some one—you mean—to be sure I did," replied Montague, testily. "But where is the good or the harm of seeing him? The fellow runs like a lamp-lighter. I wanted to *catch* him, but he had stolen away before I could reach the hall-door. However, it is no great matter; next time, I dare say, I'll do better; and egad, if I once come within reach of him, I'll introduce his shoulders to the weight of my cane, in a way to make him cry *peccavi.*"

Notwithstanding General Montague's undertakings and exhortations, however, Barton continued to suffer from the self-same unexplained cause; go how, when, or where he would, he was still constantly dogged or confronted by the hateful being who had established over him so dreadful and mysterious an influence; nowhere and at no time was he secure against the odious appearance which haunted him with such diabolic perseverance. His depression, misery, and excitement became more settled and alarming every day, and the mental agonies that ceaselessly preyed upon him, began at last so sensibly to affect his health, that Lady L—— and General Montague succeeded, without, indeed, much difficulty, in persuading him to try a short tour on the Continent, in the hope that an entire change of scene would, at all events, have the effect of breaking through the influences of local association, which the more sceptical of his friends assumed to be by no means inoperative in suggesting and perpetuating what they conceived to be a mere form of nervous illusion. General Montague indeed was persuaded that the figure which haunted his intended son-in-law was by no means the creation of his own imagination, but, on the contrary, a substantial form of flesh and blood, animated by a spiteful and obstinate resolution, perhaps with some murderous object in perspective, to watch and follow the unfortunate gentleman. Even this hypothesis was not a very pleasant one; yet it was plain that if Barton could ever be convinced that there was nothing preternatural in the phenomenon which he had hitherto regarded in that light, the affair would lose all its terrors in his eyes, and wholly cease to exercise upon his health and spirits the baleful influence which it had hitherto done. He therefore reasoned, that if the annoyance were actually escaped by mere locomotion and change of scene, it obviously could not have originated in any supernatural agency.

Yielding to their persuasions, Barton left Dublin for England, accompanied by General Montague. They posted rapidly to London, and thence to Dover, whence they took the packet with a fair wind for Calais. The general's confidence in the result of the expedition on Barton's spirits had risen day by day, since their departure from the shores of Ireland; for, to the inexpressible relief and delight of the latter, he had not, since then, so much as even once fancied a repetition of those impressions which had, when at home, drawn him gradually down to the very depths of horror and despair. This exemption from what he had begun to regard as the inevitable condition of his existence, and the sense of security which began to pervade his mind, were inexpressibly delightful; and in the exultation of what he considered his deliverance, he indulged in a thousand happy anticipations for a future into which so lately he had hardly dared to look; and in short, both he and his companion secretly congratulated themselves upon the termination of that persecution which had been to its immediate victim a source of such unspeakable agony.

It was a beautiful day, and a crowd of idlers stood upon the jetty to receive the packet, and enjoy the bustle of the new arrivals. Montague walked a few paces in advance of his friend, and as he made his way through the crowd, a little man touched his arm, and said to him, in a broad provincial *patois*—

"Monsieur is walking too fast; he will lose his sick comrade in the throng, for, by my faith, the poor gentleman seems to be fainting."

Montague turned quickly, and observed that Barton did indeed look deadly pale. He hastened to his side.

"My dear fellow, are you ill?" he asked anxiously.

The question was unheeded and twice repeated, ere Barton stammered—

"I saw him—by ——, I saw him!"

"*Him!*—the—the wretch—who—where—when did you see him—where is he?" cried Montague, looking around him."

"I saw him—but he is gone," repeated Barton, faintly.

"But where—where? For God's sake, speak," urged Montague, vehemently.

"It is but this moment—*here*," said he.

"But what did he look like—what had he on—what did he wear—quick, quick," urged his excited companion, ready to dart among the crowd, and collar the delinquent on the spot.

"He touched your arm—he spoke to you—he pointed to me. God be merciful to me, there is no escape," said Barton, in the low, subdued tones of intense despair.

Montague had already bustled away in all the flurry of mingled hope and indignation; but though the singular *personnel* of the stranger who had accosted him was vividly and perfectly impressed upon his recollection, he failed to discover among the crowd even the slightest resemblance to him. After a fruitless search, in which he enlisted the services of several of the bystanders, who aided all the more zealously, as they believed he had been robbed, he at length, out of breath and baffled, gave over the attempt.

"Ah, my friend, it won't do," said Barton, with the faint voice and bewildered, ghastly look of one who has been stunned by some mortal shock; "there is no use in contending with it; whatever it is, the dreadful association between me and it is now established—I shall never escape—never, never!"

"Nonsense, nonsense, my dear fellow; don't talk so," said Montague, with something at once of irritation and dismay; "you must not, I say; we'll jockey the scoundrel yet; never mind, I say—never mind."

It was, however, but lost labour to endeavour henceforward to inspire Barton with one ray of hope; he became utterly desponding. This intangible, and, as it seemed, utterly inadequate influence was fast destroying his energies of intellect, character, and health. His first object was now to return to Ireland, there, as he believed, and now almost hoped, speedily to die.

To Ireland accordingly he came, and one of the first faces he saw upon the shore, was again that of his implacable and dreaded persecutor. Barton seemed at last to have lost not only all enjoyment and every hope in existence, but all independence of will besides. He now submitted himself passively to the management of the friends most nearly interested in his welfare. With the apathy of entire despair, he implicitly assented to whatever measures they suggested and advised; and as a last resource, it was determined to remove him to a house of Lady L——'s, in the neighbourhood of Clontarf, where, with the advice of his medical attendant, who persisted in his opinion that the whole train of consequences resulted merely from some nervous derangement, it was resolved that he was to confine himself strictly to the house, and to make use only of those apartments which commanded a view of an enclosed yard, the gates of which were to be kept jealously locked. Those precautions would certainly secure him against the casual appearance of any living form, which his excited imagination might possibly confound with the spectre which, as it was contended, his fancy recognised in every figure which bore even a distant or general resemblance to the traits with which he had at first invested it. A month or six weeks' absolute seclusion under these conditions, it was hoped might, by interrupting the series of these terrible impressions, gradually dispel the predisposing apprehensions, and effectually break up the associations which had confirmed the supposed disease, and rendered recovery hopeless. Cheerful society and that of his friends was to be constantly supplied, and on the whole, very sanguine expectations were indulged in, to the effect that under the treatment thus detailed, the obstinate hypochondria of the patient might at length give way.

Accompanied, therefore, by Lady L——, General Montague and his daughter—his own affianced bride—poor Barton—himself never daring to cherish a hope of his ultimate emancipation from the strange horrors under which his life was literally wasting away—took possession of the apartments, whose situation protected him against the dreadful intrusions, from which he shrunk with such unutterable terror.

After a little time, a steady persistence in this system began to manifest its results, in a very marked though gradual improvement, alike in the health and spirits of the invalid. Not, indeed, that anything at all approaching to complete recovery was yet discernible. On the contrary, to those who had not seen him since the commencement of his strange sufferings, such an alteration would have been apparent as might well have shocked them. The improvement, however, such as it was, was welcomed with gratitude and delight, especially by the poor young lady, whom her attachment to him, as well as her now singularly painful position, consequent on his mysterious and protracted illness, rendered an object of pity scarcely one degree less to be commiserated than himself.

A week passed—a fortnight—a month—and yet no recurrence of the hated visitation had agitated and terrified him as usual. The treatment had, so far forth, been followed by complete success. The chain of associations had been broken. The constant pressure upon the overtasked spirits had been removed, and, under these comparatively favourable circumstances, the sense of social community with the world about him, and something of human interest, if not of enjoyment, began to reanimate his mind.

It was about this time that Lady L——, who, like most old ladies of the day, was deep in family receipts, and a great pretender to medical science, being engaged in the concoction of certain unpalatable mixtures, of marvellous virtue, dispatched her own maid to the kitchen garden, with a list of herbs, which were there to be carefully culled, and brought back to her for the purpose stated. The handmaiden, however, returned with her task scarce half completed, and a good deal flurried and alarmed. Her mode of accounting for her precipitate retreat and evident agitation was odd, and, to the old lady, unpleasantly startling.

It appeared that she had repaired to the kitchen garden, pursuant to her mistress's directions, and had there begun to make the specified selection among the rank and neglected herbs which crowded one corner of the enclosure, and while engaged in this pleasant labour, she carelessly sang a fragment of an old song, as she said, "to keep herself company." She was, however, interrupted by an ill-natured laugh; and, looking up, she saw through the old thorn hedge, which surrounded the garden, a singularly ill-looking little man, whose countenance wore the stamp of menace and malignity, standing close to her, at the other side of the hawthorn screen. She described herself as utterly unable to move or speak, while he charged her with a message for Captain Barton; the substance of which she distinctly remembered to have been to the effect, that he, Captain Barton, must come abroad as usual, and show himself to his friends, out of doors, or else prepare for a visit in his own chamber. On concluding this brief message, the stranger had, with a threatening air, got down into the outer ditch, and, seizing the hawthorn stems in his hands, seemed on the point of climbing through the fence—a feat which might have been accomplished without much difficulty. Without, of course, awaiting this result, the girl—throwing down her treasures of thyme and rosemary—had turned and ran, with the swiftness of terror, to the house. Lady L—— commanded her, on pain of instant dismissal, to observe an absolute silence respecting all that passed of the incident which related to Captain Barton; and, at the same time, directed instant search to be made by her men, in the garden and the fields adjacent. This measure, however, was attended with the usual unsuccess, and, filled with fearful and undefinable misgivings, Lady L—— communicated the incident to her brother. The story, however, until long afterwards, went no further, and, of course, it was jealously guarded from Barton, who continued to amend, though slowly and imperfectly.

Barton now began to walk occasionally in the court-yard which we have mentioned, and which being surrounded by a high wall, commanded no view beyond its own extent. Here he, therefore, considered himself perfectly secure; and, but for a careless violation of orders by one of the grooms, he might have enjoyed, at least for some time longer, his much-prized immunity. Opening upon the public road, this yard was entered by a wooden gate, with a wicket in it, and which was further defended by an iron gate upon the outside. Strict orders had been given to keep them carefully locked; but, spite of these, it had happened that one day, as Barton was slowly pacing this narrow enclosure, in his accustomed walk, and reaching the further extremity, was turning to retrace his steps, he saw the boarded wicket ajar, and the face of his tormentor immovably looking at him through the iron bars. For a few seconds he stood riveted to the earth—breathless and bloodless—in the fascination of that dreaded gaze, and then fell helplessly and insensibly upon the pavement.

There he was found a few minutes afterwards, and conveyed to his room—the apartment which he was never afterwards to leave alive. Henceforward a marked and unaccountable change was observable in the tone of his mind. Captain Barton was now no longer the excited and despairing man he had been before; a strange alteration had passed upon him—an unearthly tranquillity reigned in his mind—it was the anticipated stillness of the grave.

"Montague, my friend, this struggle is nearly ended now," he said, tranquilly, but with a look of fixed and fearful awe. "I have, at last, some comfort from that world of spirits, from which my punishment has come. I now know that my sufferings will soon be over."

Montague pressed him to speak on.

"Yes," said he, in a softened voice, "my punishment is nearly ended. From sorrow, perhaps, I shall never, in time or eternity, escape; but my *agony* is almost over. Comfort has been revealed to me, and what remains of my allotted struggle I will bear with submission—even with hope."

"I am glad to hear you speak so tranquilly, my dear fellow," said Montague; "peace and cheer of mind are all you need to make you what you were."

"No, no—I never can be that," said he, mournfully. "I am no longer fit for life. I am soon to die: I do not shrink from death as I did. I am to see *him* but once again, and then all is ended."

"He said so, then?" suggested Montague.

"*He?*—No, no: good tidings could scarcely come through him; and these were good and welcome; and they came so solemnly and sweetly—with unutterable love and melancholy, such as I could not—without saying more than is needful, or fitting, of other long-past scenes and persons—fully explain to you." As Barton said this he shed tears.

"Come, come," said Montague, mistaking the source of his emotions, "you must not give way. What is it, after all, but a pack of dreams and nonsense; or, at worst, the practices of a scheming rascal that enjoys his power of playing upon your nerves, and loves to exert it—a sneaking vagabond that owes you a grudge, and pays it off this way, not daring to try a more manly one."

"A grudge, indeed, he owes me—you say rightly," said Barton, with a sudden shudder; "a grudge, as you call it. Oh, my God! when the justice of heaven permits the Evil one to carry out a scheme of vengeance—when its execution is committed to the lost and terrible victim of sin, who owes his own ruin to the man, the very man, whom he is commissioned to pursue—then, indeed, the torments and terrors of hell are anticipated on earth. But heaven has dealt mercifully with me—hope has opened to me at last; and if death could come without the dreadful sight I am doomed to see, I would gladly close my eyes this moment upon the world. But though death is welcome, I shrink with an agony you cannot understand—a maddening agony, an actual frenzy of terror—from the last encounter with that—that DEMON, who has drawn me thus to the verge of the chasm, and who is himself to plunge me down. I am to see him again—once more—but under circumstances unutterably more terrific than ever."

As Barton thus spoke, he trembled so violently that Montague was really alarmed at the extremity of his sudden agitation, and hastened to lead him back to the topic which had before seemed to exert so tranquillizing an effect upon his mind.

"It was not a dream," he said, after a time; "I was in a different state—I felt differently and strangely; and yet it was all as real, as clear, and vivid, as what I now see and hear—it was a reality."

"And what *did* you see and hear?" urged his companion.

"When I awakened from the swoon I fell into on seeing *him*," said Barton, continuing as if he had not heard the question, "it was slowly, very slowly—I was reclining by the margin of a broad lake, with misty hills all round, and a soft, melancholy, rose-coloured light illuminated it all. It was unusually sad and lonely, and yet more beautiful than any earthly scene. My head was leaning on the lap of a girl, and she was singing a strange and wondrous song, that told, I know not how—whether by words or harmonies—of all my life—all that is past, and all that is still to come; and with the song the old feelings that I thought had perished within me came back, and tears flowed from my eyes—partly for the song and its mysterious beauty, and partly for the unearthly sweetness of her voice; and yet I knew the voice—oh! how well; and I was spell-bound as I listened and looked at the strange and solitary scene, without stirring, almost without breathing—and, alas! alas! without turning my eyes toward the face that I knew was near me, so sweetly powerful was the enchantment that held me. And so, slowly and softly, the song and scene grew fainter, and ever fainter, to my senses, till all was dark and still again. And then I wakened to this world, as you saw, comforted, for I knew that I was forgiven much." Barton wept again long and bitterly.

From this time, as we have said, the prevailing tone of his mind was one of profound and tranquil melancholy. This, however, was not without its interruptions. He was thoroughly impressed with the conviction that he was to experience another and a final visitation, illimitably transcending in horror all he had before experienced. From this anticipated and unknown agony, he often shrunk in such paroxysms of abject terror and distraction, as filled the whole household with dismay and superstitious panic. Even those among them who affected to discredit the supposition of preternatural agency in the matter, were often in their secret souls visited during the darkness and solitude of night with qualms and apprehensions, which they would not have readily confessed; and none of them attempted to dissuade Barton from the resolution on which he now systematically acted, of shutting himself up in his own apartment. The window-blinds of this room were kept jealously down; and his own man was seldom out of his presence, day or night, his bed being placed in the same chamber.

This man was an attached and respectable servant; and his duties, in addition to those ordinarily imposed upon *valets*, but which Barton's independent habits generally dispensed with, were to attend carefully to the simple precautions by means of which his master hoped to exclude the dreaded recurrence of the "Watcher," as the strange letter he had at first received had designated his persecutor. And, in addition to attending to these arrangements, which consisted merely in anticipating the possibility of his master's being, through any unscreened window or open door, exposed to the dreaded influence, the valet was never to suffer him to be for one moment alone—total solitude, even for a minute, had become to him now almost as intolerable as the idea of going abroad into the public ways—it was like some instinctive anticipation of what was coming.

It is needless to say, that under these mysterious and horrible circumstances, no steps were taken toward the fulfilment of that engagement into which he had entered. There was quite disparity enough in point of years, and indeed of habits, between the young lady and Captain Barton, to have precluded anything like very vehement or romantic attachment on her part. Though grieved and anxious, therefore, she was very far from being heart-broken; a circumstance which, for the sentimental purposes of our tale, is much to be deplored. But truth must be told, especially in a narration, whose chief, if not only, pretensions to interest consist in a rigid adherence to facts, or what are so reported to have been.

Miss Montague, however, devoted much of her time to a patient but fruitless attempt to cheer the unhappy invalid. She read for him, and conversed with him; but it was apparent that whatever exertions he made, the endeavour to escape from the one constant and ever present fear that preyed upon him, was utterly and miserably unavailing.

Young ladies are much given to the cultivation of pets; and among those who shared the favour of Miss Montague was a fine old owl, which the gardener, who caught him napping among the ivy of a ruined stable, had dutifully presented to that young lady.

The caprice which regulates such preferences was manifested in the extravagant favour with which this grim and ill-favoured bird was at once distinguished by his mistress; and, trifling as this whimsical circumstance may seem, I am forced to mention it, inasmuch as it is connected, oddly enough, with the concluding scene of the story. Barton, so far from sharing in this liking for the new favourite, regarded it from the first with an antipathy as violent as it was utterly unaccountable. Its very vicinity was unsupportable to him. He seemed to hate and dread it with a vehemence absolutely laughable, and which, to those who have never witnessed the exhibition of antipathies of this kind, would seem all but incredible.

With these few words of preliminary explanation, I shall proceed to state the particulars of the last scene in this strange series of incidents. It was almost two o'clock one winter's night, and Barton was, as usual at that hour, in his bed; the servant we have mentioned occupied a smaller bed in the same room, and a light was burning. The man was on a sudden aroused by his master, who said—

"I can't get it out of my head that that accursed bird has got out somehow, and is lurking in some corner of the room. I have been dreaming of him. Get up, Smith, and look about; search for him. Such hateful dreams!"

The servant rose, and examined the chamber, and while engaged in so doing, he heard the well-known sound, more like a long-drawn gasp than a hiss, with which these birds from their secret haunts affright the quiet of the night. This ghostly indication of its proximity—for the sound proceeded from the passage upon which Barton's chamber-door opened—determined the search of the servant, who, opening the door, proceeded a step or two forward for the purpose of driving the bird away. He had, however, hardly entered the lobby, when the door behind him slowly swung to under the impulse, as it seemed, of some gentle current of air; but as immediately over the door there was a kind of window, intended in the day-time to aid in lighting the passage, and through which at present the rays of the candle were issuing, the valet could see quite enough for his purpose. As he advanced he heard his master—who, lying in a well-curtained bed, had not, as it seemed, perceived his exit from the room—call him by name, and direct him to place the candle on the table by his bed. The servant, who was now some way in the long passage, and not liking to raise his voice for the purpose of replying, lest he should startle the sleeping inmates of the house, began to walk hurriedly and softly back again, when, to his amazement, he heard a voice in the interior of the chamber answering calmly, and actually saw, through the window which overtopped the door, that the light was slowly shifting, as if carried across the chamber in answer to his master's call. Palsied by a feeling akin to terror, yet not unmingled with a horrible curiosity, he stood breathless and listening at the threshold, unable to summon resolution to push open the door and enter. Then came a rustling of the curtains, and a sound like that of one who in a low voice hushes a child to rest, in the midst of which he heard Barton say, in a tone of stifled horror—"Oh, God—oh, my God!" and repeat the same exclamation several times. Then ensued a silence, which again was broken by the same strange soothing sound; and at last there burst forth, in one swelling peal, a yell of agony so appalling and hideous, that, under some impulse of ungovernable horror, the man rushed to the door, and with his whole strength strove to force it open. Whether it was that, in his agitation, he had himself but imperfectly turned the handle, or that the door was really secured upon the inside, he failed to effect an entrance; and as he tugged and pushed, yell after yell rang louder and wilder through the chamber, accompanied all the while by the same hushed sounds. Actually freezing with terror, and scarce knowing what he did, the man turned and ran down the passage, wringing his hands in the extremity of horror and irresolution. At the stair-head he was encountered by General Montague, scared and eager, and just as they met the fearful sounds had ceased.

"What is it?—who—where is your master?" said Montague with the incoherence of extreme agitation. "Has anything—for God's sake, is anything wrong?"

"Lord have mercy on us, it's all over," said the man, staring wildly toward his master's chamber. "He's dead, sir—I'm sure he's dead.

Without waiting for inquiry or explanation, Montague, closely followed by the servant, hurried to the chamber-door, turned the handle, and pushed it open. As the door yielded to his pressure, the ill-omened bird of which the servant had been in search, uttering its spectral warning, started suddenly from the far side of the bed, and flying through the door-way close over their heads, and extinguishing, in his passage, the candle which Montague carried, crashed through the skylight that overlooked the lobby, and sailed away into the darkness of the outer space.

"There it is, God bless us," whispered the man, after a breathless pause.

"Curse that bird," muttered the general, startled by the suddenness of the apparition, and unable to conceal his discomposure.

"The candle is moved," said the man, after another breathless pause; "see, they put it by the bed."

"Draw the curtains, fellow, and don't stand gaping there," whispered Montague, sternly.

The man hesitated.

"Hold this, then," said Montague, impatiently thrusting the candlestick into the servant's hand, and himself advancing to the bed-side, he drew the curtains apart. The light of the candle, which was still burning at the bed-side, fell upon a figure huddled together, and half upright, at the head of the bed. It seemed as though it had slunk back as far as the solid panelling would allow, and the hands were still clutched in the bed-clothes.

"Barton, Barton, Barton!" cried the general, with a strange mixture of awe and vehemence. He took the candle, and held it so that it shone full upon the face. The features were fixed, stern, and white; the jaw was fallen; and the sightless eyes, still open, gazed vacantly forward toward the front of the bed. "God Almighty, he's dead," muttered the general, as he looked upon this fearful spectacle. They both continued to gaze upon it in silence for a minute or more. "And cold, too," whispered Montague, withdrawing his hand from that of the dead man.

"And see, see—may I never have life, sir," added the man, after another pause, with a shudder, "but there was something else on the bed with him. Look there—look there—see that, sir."

As the man thus spoke, he pointed to a deep indenture, as if caused by a heavy pressure, near the foot of the bed.

Montague was silent.

"Come, sir, come away, for God's sake," whispered the man, drawing close up to him, and holding fast by his arm, while he glanced fearfully round; "what good can be done here now—come away, for God's sake!"

At this moment they heard the steps of more than one approaching, and Montague, hastily desiring the servant to arrest their progress, endeavoured to loose the rigid gripe with which the fingers of the dead man were clutched in the bed-clothes, and drew, as well as he was able, the awful figure into a reclining posture; then closing the curtains carefully upon it, he hastened himself to meet those persons that were approaching.

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It is needless to follow the personages so slightly connected with this narrative, into the events of their after life; it is enough for us to remark, that no clue to the solution of these mysterious occurrences was ever after discovered; and so long an interval having now passed since the event which we have just described concluded this strange history, it is scarcely to be expected that time can throw any new lights upon its dark and inexplicable outline. Until the secrets of the earth shall be no longer hidden, therefore, these transactions must remain shrouded in their original impenetrable obscurity.

The only occurrence in Captain Barton's former life to which reference was ever made, as having any possible connexion with the sufferings with which his existence closed, and which he himself seemed to regard as working out a retribution for some grievous sin of his past life, was a circumstance which not for several years after his death was brought to light. The nature of this disclosure was painful to his relatives, and discreditable to his memory. As, however, we have exercised the caution of employing fictitious names; and as there are now very few living who will be able to refer to the actors in this drama, their *real* names and places in society, there is nothing to prevent our stating, in two or three lines, the substance of this discovery.

It appeared, then, that some six years before Captain Barton's final return to Dublin, he had formed, in the town of Plymouth, a guilty attachment, the object of which was the daughter of one of the ship's crew under his command. The father had visited the frailty of his unhappy child with extreme harshness, and even brutality, and it was said that she had died heart-broken. Presuming upon Barton's implication in her guilt, this man had conducted himself toward him with marked insolence, and Barton retaliated this, and what he resented with still more exasperated bitterness—his treatment of the unfortunate girl—by a systematic exercise of those terrible and arbitrary severities which the regulations of the navy placed at the command of those who are responsible for its discipline. The man had at length made his escape, while the vessel was in port at Lisbon, but died, as it was said, in an hospital in that town, of the wounds inflicted in one of his recent and sanguinary punishments.

Whether these circumstances in reality bear, or not, upon the occurrences of Barton's after-life, it is, of course, impossible to say. It seems, however, more than probable that they were, at least in his own mind, closely associated with them. But however the truth may be, as to the origin and motives of this mysterious persecution, there can be no doubt that, with respect to the agencies by which it was accomplished, absolute and impenetrable mystery is like to prevail until the day of doom.

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FIRESIDE HORRORS FOR CHRISTMAS.

There are two things in particular for which we feel thankful, when we see the year verging to its close, and the dusk falling earlier and earlier every day. The first is, that we never saw a ghost ourselves, and the second is, that other people did. The world does not always consider the debt of gratitude it is under, to those who have vision for the invisible. Winter would not limp more tediously away without the long evenings, than the long evenings without ghost-stories. We do not envy the feelings of the man who can get through his December without any deeper shudderings than those produced by physical cold. We have little sympathy with people whose talk, when they hitch their chairs closer together about a well-heaped hearth, does not instinctively turn on haunted houses, nightmares, and warnings before death. To us, the bars of a grate infallibly suggest the ribs of a skeleton; and as we watch the thin smoke, flitting silently up the chimney, our thoughts are of things in winding-sheets, that glide by moonlight along the aisles of ancient churches. In what manner our own shadow, dancing behind us on the wall or ceiling, might affect our imagination at such a time, we have no means of saying, as we have always felt disinclined to the indulgence of any rash curiosity on the subject. Who knows what other shadow we might see, if we turned round to look at our own? And if we saw none *but* our own, the spell would be broken, the hearth would be disenchanted, the mysterious "behind us" would be spoiled of its mystery, and *that* evening's tale of wonder would be told to listless and incredulous ears. We pity the man who, from his place at the Christmas fireside, has looked behind him; for that man, life has lost its illusions; he has lifted the veil of Isis, and "seen the Truth" in the shape of his grandmother; he has leaped into the abyss, and found it just knee-deep. The law of the winter evening is—look straight into the embers, and think of your favourite horror. When you feel horrorized through and through, begin to talk, still looking straight into the embers. Horrors belong as naturally to the fireside, as the fireside belongs to Christmas. The cold of the season does not more cravingly demand the genial blaze, than the heat of the blaze demands that agreeable chill which a churchyard reminiscence will send with electric swiftness through the blood. The passing shiver that runs over you as you listen to some chimney-corner legend, of wan women with their throats cut, that sit down opposite to solitary students at midnight, or of hands thrust out of unhallowed graves, to point to the murderer as he goes by, is as gratefully refrigerant and bracing to the nerves as a raspberry ice in the dog days. Then, there is nothing that so much heightens the enjoyableness of a ghostly gossip about the Yule fire, in an old rambling country-house, as the thought of the wide staircases you will by-and-bye have to ascend, the long corridors you will have to traverse, the dark rooms, with their doors standing open, you will have to pass, with no company but your candle and the echo of your footsteps, on your way from that warm parlour, that lies bathed in the glow of the wood fire, as in the "light of setting suns," to the woe-begone, vast chamber with a bed like a hearse, that awaits you at the farthest end of the scarce half-inhabited mansion. The anticipation of this pilgrimage makes the circle round the hearth a true magic circle, out of the bounds of which no one cares to tread. The living world has shrunk to the dimensions of that charmed ring, and all beyond its confines is a dark and spectre-peopled void—a world of spirits that have heard you talking about them. No wonder you have little mind to go out into the goblin domain, with no better amulet against its terrors than a bed-room candlestick. And why should you do so? Why not rather pile on more faggots, and commend yourself to the safe keeping of Vesta, till the "witching time of night" be past? Why not outwatch the ghosts, and betake yourself to your own bed when the first cock-crow summons them to theirs?

If any one doubts that telling ghost-stories is the proper employment for a winter's night, let him open his window, and look out. Can anything be more spectral? There is not a hill or a hollow in sight, but has put on a shroud, and stares at him with a still, white face, the phantom of itself. The trees stand like giant skeletons, lifting their bleached arms towards the trooping clouds that hurry across the sky, like witches flocking to their sabbath. What is all that but a ghost-story in dumb-show, told by the earth to the stars? If the doubter can go on doubting in the face of an example like this, nothing that we could urge in the way of precept would be likely to decide him: we give him up, and can only hope it may not be our fate to have him for a reader. What has he to do with our fireside horrors? He is a horror himself, more horrible than any that we can conjure up, for whatever fireside he sits at.

Thee, actual reader, we well discern to be of a different spirit: come, then, and shudder with us, in the first place, over some ghastlinesses gleaned from a delightful little book, published this year by Mr. Burns, and bearing the title, most germane to our subject, of "Communications between the Seen and the Unseen Worlds."*

You are to suppose, then, that a party of friends are assembled, perhaps for the Christmas holidays, at a house which, from some accidental indications, we judge to be in the country. A starry sky, the sight of which it is pronounced "almost a pity to shut out," leads the conversation of the friends to the comparative beauty of the winter and the summer night; and the gentler season most naturally finds an advocate in a gentle lady of the company, who is introduced to you by the name of Eusebia. Eloquently does Eusebia plead for the season of her preference. The rare power of "painting with words" is hers in a high degree, and you feel, as you listen, that the influence of the hour she describes is upon you—

> "When the west has lost its more gaudy hues, and the only trace of the departed sun is the calm, still belt of green, that reposes above the distant hills, as if they were the barriers of this world, and that quiet ocean of light the gulf which parts us from the realm of spirits."

Then, she insists further—

> "There is the soft scent of the sleeping flowers, the dewiness of the air, the few bright stars that peep through the still faintly-illuminated sky; the joyous song, it may be, of the nightingale; the merry chirp, that seems, wherever you go, to be equally close to you, of the grasshopper. It is repose in its truest sense,—life enough to banish the idea that nature, as people talk, can ever sleep,—rest enough to lead on the mind to a more perfect, even an eternal repose."

Eusebia's friends will not deny that the summer night is beautiful; but there is one of them, at least—his name is Pistus—who holds that the winter night is more beautiful still, or, in any case, that its beauty is of a more solemn and spiritual character. Too much of this world, Pistus thinks, is mixed up in our ideas of the night of summer. With its flowers, its birds, its dew, and that green brightness over the western hills, it is of the earth, earthy; it does not carry us away to other worlds, but throws a colouring of poetry and illusion over our enthralment to this. It is not so, he exclaims, with the winter night!—

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* "The Unseen World; communications with it, real or imaginary, including Apparitions, Warnings, Haunted Places, Prophecies, Aerial Visions, Astrology," &c. London: James Burns. 1847.

> "The sky, and the sky alone, so glorious, yet so awful, so spangled with brightness, so mysterious in its depth, that is all. There is nothing that can remind any sense of earth; nay, the very cold seems to enhance the solitude, to tear away all connexion between yourself and external nature, to make you feel more utterly lonely. And you stand and gaze on those bright worlds, till you seem as if you were banished into the desolate regions of space; and there, without any orb near you, looked forth into the perfect blackness around, and watched the motions of the worlds that above, beneath, and on every side, were moving along in their mysterious path. It is the time when you feel, if ever, that there must be a world of spirits; when the mind seems almost brought into contact with that invisible universe; and when, more than at any other period, it longs to know something of its future home, and to hear some of those 'unspeakable things which it is not lawful for a man to utter.'"

The conversation now turns on the strange and dangerous charm which we find in every glimpse, real or imaginary, into things connected with the world of the invisible. How, it is asked, can we but be interested in knowing somewhat of a region of being, to the influences of which we are, perhaps, hourly exposed—and which, hereafter, is to receive us as its denizens for ever? And yet, what peril there must be in attempting to raise a curtain which God has drawn, and which may conceal what it would scare the soul from her earthly tabernacle to see disclosed! Has that curtain ever been raised? A thousand traditionary voices say it has. Raised in prophetic dreams and omens; raised in apparitions of the dead; raised in pranks and gambolings of elves, demons and goblins; raised in pacts of the evil one with human kind. Raised, also, in visits of angels; in miraculous warnings and interferences of heavenly powers in the affairs of men; in visions and glimpses of revelation, from the sphere of essential light, vouchsafed to contemplative souls. That the invisible world has access by many avenues to the visible, the experience of all ages attests, and the friends believe. And now that they have, as it seems, nine December evenings to spend together, what employment more congenial to the time can they find, than ascertaining, if they can, the positions of these avenues, and marking them down, as it were, in a kind of spiritual chart? In other words, what task can engage them, better suited to those long winter nights, than that suggested by Pistus—to inquire into all the methods by which the intercommunion of the seen with the unseen is carried on? They will set about it forthwith. And, hear the wise resolution with which they enter upon the inquiry:—

> "In listening to any details which the wisdom of the world would reject as improbable or impossible, we shall, I hope, be guided by a wiser feeling. We will weigh them on their evidence only: if that is sufficient to convince a man in his every-day conduct, it shall be sufficient for us; if not, while we stigmatise nothing as impossible, because it is unusual, we shall return a verdict of 'not proven.'"

The plan to be pursued in the investigation is now settled. The mystic symbolism by which material nature, in such a variety of ways, seems to point to spiritual truth, is first to come under consideration; then aerial phenomena, fiery crosses, comets, and meteors, whirlwinds, and sudden tempests—viewed as prognostics of momentous events on earth; then the various luminous appearances to which popular belief has ascribed a supernatural character, "stationary lights, corpse-lights, St. Elmo's lights, firedrakes, and Will of the Wisp;" then haunted places, and the tribes that haunt them, whether classic, as "Naiads, Fauns, Satyrs, Dryads, Hamadryads," &c., or romantic, as "The Brown Man of the Moors, Fairies, the Good People, Trolls, Telchens, Pixies, and Pixycolts," not forgetting the more peculiar house-goblins, "the old Lar, and our own Robin Good-fellow." Then the "grand question" is to be debated, "If the spirits of the departed have ever been permitted to visit the living in a visible form;" this will give occasion to speak of the motives of ghostly visitations, of death-warnings, of disclosures of secret crimes, of apparitions in fulfilment of a promise, and so on. After this will come dreams, and the second-sight; and, to wind up the whole inquiry, a glance will be thrown at the grounds of the once so general belief, in astrology and witchcraft. Truly, as one of the friends remarks, "a comprehensive subject, and, if discussed with an unprejudiced mind, almost fresh ground."

As we are not going, however, to review the book, but merely to cull from it anything that seems to us particularly available for our present purpose, of tempering with a light breath of fear the heat of the Christmas fire, we will not follow the inquirers through the several stages of their task. This it will be well worth the reader's while to do for himself; and, although the friends took nine nights to get over the ground, he will find it easily accomplished in one. If he has a pleasanter night than that one, this December, he will have no reason to complain of his winter. In the meantime, we will hear Pistus, who is the travelled man of the party, tell what once befel him on a mountain excursion in the island of Madeira.

"I believe that people with the strongest nerves have the most dreadful fits of panic when they have them at all. I have wandered far and wide in the most precipitous places of mountains, and never felt it but once. I had a mind to try if the Pico do Cidrao, one of the loftiest, and, at the same time, steepest mountains of Madeira, could not be scaled from the Pico dos Arrieiros. It was a fine day in spring—we tethered our horses on the Arrieiros, and then, with our mountain-poles, and a shepherd for guide, we committed ourselves to the narrow isthmus that joins the two mountains. Narrow it is—for, on either side, it slopes down almost perpendicularly into an abyss of some two thousand feet; while, at the top, it is in many places not more than eight feet broad, and its material of crumbling scoria. Indeed, so thin is it, that it vibrates, or seems to vibrate, in a heavy gale. When we had accomplished half the distance, we sat down to rest, and gaze at the wonderful chasms which opened below us. Seeing a small crack in the earth, I looked down into that, and lo! the opposite chasm was distinctly visible through it. At last, however, up ladders of rock, assisted by the shepherd's banisters of roughly-spun rope, round corners where you trusted yourself to the young oak, or the sapling *til*, and hung for a moment over a depth that it makes my blood run cold to recollect—now creeping along this side of the isthmus, now working like worms along that, we stood under the shadow of the great Cidrao itself. Here, on a little platform of turf, my friend sat down, weary and sick at heart, while I resolved, with a good courage, still to follow my guide. On we went: the path was a ledge of about eighteen inches, a steep precipice above, a steep precipice below, all bare rock—no twining root, or friendly twig, to give the hand a firm, nor even an imaginary hold. Just then the northern gale swept a mass of clouds into the abyss, and it seemed as if we were walking along the edge of the world. I began to feel a little uncomfortable, when my guide, by way of consoling me, wrenched a large rock from its place, and hurled it downwards into the clouds. I lost it in that soft bed, but half a minute afterwards its crash came up from beneath, echoed from crag to crag, and seeming as if it came from another world. Oh, I shall never forget that moment! My brain seemed to turn round, my limbs to have no power of support, and I felt that horrible desire of leaping after the rock, the descent of which I had just witnessed. That was my only panic, and I thought it would have been my first and last."

There is nothing *obviously* preternatural in the above; but, the question being raised, to what immediate cause we are to attribute the terrible, and apparently malign influences which, in cases of the kind, nature exercises over us, a solution is offered, which gives to these "toys of desperation" a ghastly character indeed. The speaker who undertakes to answer the question is named Sophron, and here is what he says:—

"If you ask my opinion, I have long believed it to be the immediate effect of temptation. The name, *panic*, proves that the spirits who were supposed to haunt wild and lonely scenery, were also supposed to be gifted with an extraordinary influence over the mind; just as, in Gothic lore, fairies were gifted with the same power of depriving their unwelcome visitants of reason. Now, that the evil spirits by which we are surrounded, should delight in making God's works, which in themselves are very good, occasions of the misery of man, is extremely likely in itself, and consistent with all analogy. We do not remember, or we will not believe, that the presence of Christians must make an inroad on the powers of darkness; that they cannot exercise the same influence over mankind in such regions, as in wild and lonely mountains, which Holy Church can scarcely be said to have vindicated,—almost inaccessible to man,—intended, to the end of the world, to be none of his, to whomever else they may be given. . . . . . . True, there is a brighter side to the picture. Angels may delight in solitudes unstained by sin: and peaks, like those of Chimboraço and Himalaya, may be, could we only hear it, vocal with the songs of the just made perfect. But still it is a solemn thought that the doom has been once spoken, which, till the regeneration of the heavens and earth by fire, must remain in some sense in force, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake.' The Church, we know, has a power of reversing this curse; but, till she has blest, it remains, and must remain. The sorest temptations which the history of the Church can recount, have taken place in the desert; also, I grant you, some of the most glorious victories. We must expect the one, we may hope for the other."

We should like to know how Sophron would account for the fact, that the same giddy impulse which seizes the wanderer in the solitudes of the Alps or the Andes, is also not unfrequently felt by those who look down from consecrated minster-towers, in which christened bells, the terror of all imps of darkness, are hung. We have felt the solicitations of the dreadful magnetism ourselves, when looking through the open-work of the spire of Strasburg; and more than one dizzy brain has yielded to the fatal fascination, from the same holy height. It is not many years since a laughing young girl, into whose pure, glad soul, the thought of suicide had never thrown its shadow, sprang from that spire, in such a sudden passion of mad terror, to the pavement, five hundred feet beneath. Now we are very much mistaken in Sophron, or he will confess that cathedral steeples, built in the ages of faith, are the very antipodes, spiritually, of those wild and unchristianized solitudes which "Holy Church can scarcely be said to have vindicated." Exeter Hall may sneer at the sacredness of a Strasburg minster, but Sophron does not believe that Luther was the founder of the Christian religion; or that the day of Pentecost was that on which the confession of Augsburg was drawn up. How, then, will he account for panics occurring on the tops of Catholic and devil-dreaded belfries?

Leaving that question, we turn to those enigmatical appearances which, be they natural or supernatural in their origin, are oftenest observed to present themselves in situations unreclaimed, or unreclaimable by the hand of man, from the desolation of the primal curse. Of this kind are the lights that lure unwary travellers into marshes, or that gleam from lonely headlands on stormy nights, and draw the inexperienced seaman upon sandbanks, or the ledges of a rocky shore. Such lights, Pistus tells us, are seen in nights of tempest, along the wild capes and crags of Madeira; glancing up and down precipitous cliffs; leaping over mountain-chasms and ragged beds of torrents; now almost dipping in the surf that beats the bottom of the rocks; now burning on the very brow of the beetling sea-wall. "The fishermen," says Pistus, "believe them to be tormented souls, thus working out part of their punishment, and testify great horror at the apparition."

All this our philosophy knows how to explain; but Sophron has something to tell, which no theory, that we are aware of, will account for. What does the reader think of this?—

> "There is a bed-room in Lulworth Castle, in Dorsetshire, where, on a particular spot on the wall, a pale phosphoric light is always to be seen when the windows are darkened. I have heard, that to wake in the stillness of the night, and to see this pale light glaring quietly on you, is a most unpleasant thing. And so the proprietors thought, for they had the wall pulled down and rebuilt, but to no effect; the light appeared again, and is to be seen there to this day."

We confess we do not exactly envy the guest at Lulworth Castle, who has to sleep in this particular bed-room, after an evening of ghost-stories about the Christmas fire.

Under the chapter of death-warnings, the following is related, and has a pleasant touch of horror about it:—

> "When a man, whose whole course of life had been marked by the most flagitious atrocities, was lying on his death-bed, near St. Ives (in Cornwall), a black ship, with black sails, was observed to stand in to the bay, into shallows where seamen felt convinced that no ship of that apparent burden could float. At the moment the soul passed

from the body, the vessel stood out again, nor was it ever seen more."

We do not know whether the reader will be affected as we were, by the following account of a dream; but we own that few things of the kind have impressed us more disagreeably. Sophron *loquitur* :—

"A married lady of my acquaintance dreamed that she was compelled one Sunday to stay at home, while the rest of her family went to church; that the house was one which she had never seen before; that she heard a knock at the door, and went to open it; that a man of most ill-favoured appearance entered, and began to insult her, on which she awoke in terror. Some time after, she removed temporarily to another house, and it so fell out, that one Sunday she stayed at home herself, in order that the rest of her family might be able to go to church. While there alone, she heard a knock at the front door, and there being no one else in the house, went down to open it. When she had reached the hall, the remembrance of her dream flashed in an instant across her mind, yet she had not sufficient faith in it to hesitate about opening the door. She did so; and behold! there stood a man, the exact counterpart of him whom she had seen in her dream. She shut the door in his face, locked and bolted it, and awaited the return of her family in great agitation. The man (whoever he was) could not be found. Now that this was a providential warning of danger, it is hardly possible to deny."

The mention of dreams leads to that of second-sight, and this to predictions of death in general. Relating to this topic, a curious circumstance is mentioned, recorded in the account of the plague that depopulated Rome during the pontificate of St. Agatha. In the dead of the night, a knock, sometimes single, sometimes repeated, was heard at the door of doomed houses, whether at the time infected or not; and as many knocks as were heard in the night, so many deaths followed on the succeeding day. There is something horrible in the thought of these knocks, falling at intervals along the silent streets, in the darkness of night. It gives you the feeling as if the plague were going from door to door, making up the list of her next batch of victims. A different kind of death-warning, and one perhaps still more frightful in its character, accompanied, as we have read somewhere, the plague with which Basle was visited at the end of the sixteenth century; the dying themselves, in the unconscious fantastic babblings and delirium of the last moments, announced the names of those who were to die next after them.

Apparitions of the dead affect us with a profounder sense of terror than, perhaps, any other form in which the powers of the unseen realm can approach us. It is not mere terror; it is terror combined with shuddering antipathy—with a loathing which the idea of no *naturally* bodiless being, however evil, awakes. The blood does not curdle so at the thought of a purely diabolical visitation, as at that of finding yourself face to face with one who has been what you are—with a man who has died, and been buried. You cannot, in imagining such a visitant, escape the association of the corpse, and the grave-clothes, and the atmosphere of death, and all the characteristics of mortality which our mortal nature, just because it *is* mortal, recoils from with the most invincible abhorrence. In presenting to the reader, therefore, some account of such apparitions, we feel that we are got to the right horrors, the horrors *par excellence;* and so, without further preface, we transcribe the following story, related by our friend Sophron, in the words of Lady Fanshawe:—

"And here (she says) I cannot omit relating the following story, confirmed by Sir Thomas Baber, Sir Arnold Breamor, the Dean of Canterbury, with many more gentlemen and persons of that town. There lived, not far from Canterbury, a gentleman called Colonel Colepepper, whose mother was wedded unto Lord Strangford. This gentleman had a sister, who lived with him, as the world said, in too much love. She married Mr. Porter. This brother and sister being both atheists, and living a life according to their profession, went in a frolic unto the vault of their ancestors, where, before they returned, they pulled some of their father's and of their mother's hairs. Within a few days after, Mrs. Porter fell sick and died. Her brother kept her body in a coffin in his buttery, saying it would not be long before he died, and then they would both be buried together; but from the night of her death, till the time that we were told the story (which was three months), they say that a head, as cold as death, with curled hair like his sister's, did ever lie by him when he slept, notwithstanding he removed to several places and countries to avoid it; and several persons told us they have felt this apparition."

Lady Fanshawe's high character, Sophron justly remarks, leaves no room for the least hesitation in receiving this story, one of the most singular that he knows. Pistus agrees that the story *is* singular, and, we think, so will the reader. Nor is it more singular than frightful: we cannot conceive a truer hell on earth than that the being who had been your partner in sin while alive, should refuse to quit you when dead.

Here is a story less horrible, though scarcely less strange. The names of the parties concerned, it is mentioned, are altered, some of them being still alive:—

"Lord F. was on his travels on the Continent, when he met a young man engaged in a similar way, with whom he grew very familiar. Mr. G. (for so I will call his friend) gave him, in the course of conversation, to know that the end of his life had been predicted to him, and that he had some grounds for believing that this prediction was not without its weight and credibility. 'As how?' asked Lord F. 'I was travelling with two friends,' replied the other, 'in Italy, and at Florence we agreed to have our nativities cast by a woman there, who had a great reputation for astrological skill. She foretold that none of us would live long, and named the days on which we should each die. My two friends are dead, and that at the time she named: it remains to see whether her prediction will be verified in me.' 'Pooh, pooh!' cried Lord F., 'a mere coincidence; impossible that it should happen a third time. But what is the day she named?' Mr. G. named one about six months distant. 'And where shall you be then?' pursued Lord F. 'At Paris,' 'Why, I shall be there too. Let it be an engagement. Come you and dine with me on that very day at seven o'clock, and keep up your spirits till then. I shall be found at No. ——, Rue de ——. Do you agree to the bargain?' 'Willingly,' replied the other, and in a short space of time the friends separated. The six months passed, and a little before the appointed day, Lord F. found himself in Paris. He sent a note to Mr. G., to remind him of his engagement, and received for answer that he would come. However, a day or two after, another note was brought him, in which Mr. G. said that he was not very well, and must postpone the pleasure of dining with Lord F. till another time; that the indisposition was very trifling, and ere long he hoped to have the pleasure of waiting upon him. Lord F. thought no more of the matter, ordered dinner on the day that had been named at seven, for himself, and about six o'clock sent his servant to Mr. G.'s with a merely formal inquiry how he was. Seven o'clock came; Lord F. sat down to dinner, when, just as he was beginning his meal, the door opened, and in walked Mr. G. He walked in, it is true, but he said not a word, went up to the table, and went out again. Lord F. was alarmed, and rang the bell, and it was answered by the servant whom he had sent with the message of inquiry. 'How is Mr. G.?' he demanded. 'Dead, my lord,' was the reply: 'he died just as I reached his house.'"

Apparitions of beasts form a puzzling chapter in phantomology, and have something very demonish about them. Every one remembers

"Him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man."

But it is when they come as warnings of the approach of death, that phantom brute-shapes suggest the most disquieting apprehensions. Here is an instance of the kind, which, Sophron says, comes to him so attested, that he really knows not how to disbelieve it:—

"A family in the east of England has a tradition, that the appearance of a black dog portends the death of one of its members. It was not, I believe, said that no death took place without such warning, but only that when the apparition occurred, its meaning was certain. The eldest son of this family married. He knew not whether to believe or to disbelieve the legend. On the one hand, he thought it superstitious to receive it; and on the other, he could not, in the face of so much testimony, altogether reject it. In this state of doubt, the thing being in itself unpleasant, he resolved to say nothing on the subject to his young wife. It could only, he thought, worry and harass her, and could not, by any possibility, do any good. He kept his resolution. In due course of time he had a family, but of the apparition he saw nothing. At length one of his children was taken ill, I think with the small-pox; but the attack was slight, and not the least danger was apprehended. He was sitting down to dinner with his wife, when she said, 'I will just step up stairs and see how the child is going on, and will be back again in a moment.' She went, and returning rather hastily, said, 'the child is asleep; but pray go up stairs, for there is a large black dog lying on his bed; go and drive it out of the house.' The father had no doubt of the result. He went up stairs; there was no black dog to be seen, but the child was dead."

Pistus immediately "caps" this story with one of a family in Sussex, in which a white rabbit appears, a few hours before death, to the sick man himself. After all, a white rabbit is not so suspicious a messenger to come for you, from the other world, as a black dog; though they are both of them unclean beasts, too.

Dwarfs, gnomes, and other spirits of a gross nature and sullen mood, have always, and in all countries, been believed to haunt mines, and, as caprice sways them, sometimes to obstruct, sometimes to help the miners in their work. Many northern tales of the "wild and wonderful" are founded on this belief, which, in some mountainous regions, is not yet extinct. These spirits of the mine were not regarded with unmixed dread; only care was taken not to offend them, for they were easily moved to anger, and their revenge was terrible. Retzel, a German writer of the last century, who, being a *Bergrath*, or director of mines, must have been well acquainted with the subject, tells us a good deal about them. He says they rarely let themselves be seen in a defined shape, but rather make themselves heard under ground, in the pits where the miners work, and particularly when either a great piece of good fortune or a great calamity is near. At night, when few, or on holidays, when none of the miners are in the pits, they have their sport, and make a noise as if the work were going on in the briskest manner, especially in such pits as promise something good. Hence, judges the good Bergrath, it appears that they intend, by such noises, to give a hint to the miners to work in these places, and to win the blessing which God has therein laid, and to bring it to light. When these spirits are not provoked, they do no hurt to any one; but he who mocks or speaks scornfully of them is sure not to escape their resentment, but, in ascending and descending, is squeezed or otherwise hurt by them. And it is a belief of the miners that he who is so hurt, if he relate before the ninth day what has befallen him, must on the ninth day die, of which there are many examples.

Of these *berg-mannikins* there would seem to be two sorts, for some, when they appear, or make themselves heard, bring good fortune, some evil. They seldom take a visible form; but such as do, show themselves in the appearance of a diminutive miner, with a burning lamp; these portend good luck, and indicate rich veins of ore to be in the places where they are seen. Oftener the light only is seen, gliding swiftly, as if carried by one that ran, but the bearer appears not. These lights burn blue, and the brighter they are, the better the omen. On the other hand, when visions of beasts or of monsters appear under ground, it is an evil prognostic, and commonly there follows thereupon great ill-fortune.

These spirits, Retzel says, are no devils or infernal angels, fallen from a better state, but they, as well as the spirits of fire, air, and water, are creatures sprung from the elements, have no higher nature than that of the elements, and will be destroyed with the elements when the present system of things ceases to be. Vice or virtue cannot be attributed to them, any more than to the winds, the floods, or the lightnings; they have their fits of good and ill-humour, their spells of fair weather and foul; they are friendly to man or unfriendly, just as the elements are, with just as little merit and as little blame. But mines are sometimes haunted by a different kind of spirits, as Sophron shows in the following story:—

"You know that the Whitehaven mines run out far underneath the sea, and are some of the most terrible in England. A man who had worked all his life in them, and had always borne a high character, was laid on his death-bed, and sent for the clergyman of his parish, to whom he had been previously known. I know not of what kind the disease was; it was one, I am assured, at all events, that did not affect his mind in the least, and that, during the whole of the account which I am going to give you, he was perfectly and most manifestly himself. He related it on the word of a dying man. He assured the priest that it was no uncommon thing in the mines, for the voices of persons who had long been dead, to be heard as in conversation or debate. I do not think he said that apparitions were seen, but he affirmed that they were heard to pass along the passages with a loud kind of rushing noise; that the miners, as far as possible, got out of the way on these occasions; that the horses employed in the mines would stand still and tremble, and fall into a cold sweat; and that this was universally known to be a thing that might occur any time. One remarkable instance he gave. The overseer of the mine he used to work was, for many years, a Cumberland man, but being found guilty of some unfair proceedings, he was dismissed by the proprietors from his post, though employed in an inferior situation. The new overseer was a Northumberland man, who had the burr that distinguishes that county very strongly. To this person the degraded overseer bore the strongest hatred, and was heard to say that some day he would be his ruin. He lived, however, in apparent friendship with him; but one day they were both destroyed together by the fire-damp. It was believed in the mine that, preferring revenge to life, the ex-overseer had taken his successor, less acquainted than he with the localities of the mine, into a place where he knew the fire-damp to exist, and that without a safety-lamp, and had thus contrived his destruction. But ever after that time, in the place where the two men perished, their voices might be heard high in dispute—the Northumbrian burr being distinctly audible, and so also the well-known pronunciation of the treacherous murderer."

We will give but one more story out of this volume: the scene of it is laid on board a Brazil packet:—

"A lady was lying on the sofa in the ladies' saloon, when, to her surprise, a gentleman entered it from the grand saloon, and passing through it, went out by the door that led towards the hold. She was much astonished, both that any one should enter the room at all, at least without knocking, and at not recognizing the gentleman who did so, as she had associated with the passengers for some days. She mentioned the matter to her husband, who said that he must have been confined to his berth till then, but that it would perhaps appear, when the passengers sat down to dinner, who he was. At dinner-time the lady carefully examined her companions, and was positive that no such person was among them. She asked the captain if there were any passenger not then at table. He answered her, that there was not. She never forgot the circumstance, though her husband treated it as a mere fancy, and thought no more of it. Some time afterwards she was walking with him in London, when she pointed out a gentleman in the street, and said, with some agitation, 'There! there! that is the person whom I saw on board the packet. Do go and speak to him—pray do go and ask him if he was not there.' 'Impossible, my dear,' replied her husband; 'he would think that I meant to insult him.' However, his wife's importunity and agitation prevailed. Stepping up to the gentleman she had pointed out, and apologizing for the liberty he was about to take, 'Pray, sir,' said he, 'may I ask whether you were on board the —— Brazil packet at such a time?' 'No, sir,' replied the person addressed, 'I certainly was not; but may I inquire why you thought that I was?' The interrogator related the circumstance. 'What day was it?' asked the other. That having been settled, 'Well, sir,' said the stranger, 'it is a very remarkable circumstance that I had a twin brother, so like myself that no one could tell us apart. He died, poor fellow, in America, on that very day.'

"The most remarkable point (observes Pistus) in that story, is its localism, so to speak. A man dies in America, and his spirit is seen, on that very day, on board a ship between America and England, as if crossing from one country to the other."

Here we take leave of this very pleasant Christmas party, not without renewing our recommendation to the reader, to cultivate their further acquaintance. We have put before him some of the stories they tell, but we have said nothing to him of the delightful way in which they talk about these stories. We have passed over all their practical reflections on the subject of their discourse, all their reasonings as to the credibility of the things related, or of preternatural relations in general; all, in short, in the little volume, that is calculated to make the reader a better man. The reason is, we don't want to make the reader a better man, but merely a more uneasy one. We appeal to his nerves, not to his conscience. Our aim is not to improve, but to frighten him. Besides, if he thinks reflections upon the stories he has been reading would do him good, what is to hinder him from making as many as he pleases? There they are; let him reflect upon them for himself.

We now turn to another treasury of horrors, to wit, Mr. Joseph Glanvil's "Collection of Relations, in proof of the real existence of Apparitions, Spirits, and Witches," published in the year 1688, the never-to-be-forgotten epoch of Britain's deliverance from brass money and wooden shoes, and of Ireland's from money and shoes of any material whatever.

The following narrative is contained in a letter of Doctor Ezekias Burton to Doctor Henry More:—

"About ten years ago, one Mr. Bower, an antient man, living at Guildford in Surrey, was, upon the highway, not far from that place, found newly murdered, very barbarously, having one great cut cross his throat, and another down his breast. Two men were seized upon suspicion, and put into gaol at Guildford, to another, who had before been committed for robbing, as I suppose. That night this third man was awakened about one of the clock, and greatly terrified with an old man, who had a great gash cross his throat, almost from ear to ear, and a wound down his breast. He also came in stooping, and holding his hand to his back: thus he appeared, but said nothing. The thief called to his two new companions; they grumbled at him, but made no answer.

"In the morning he had retained so lively an impression of what he had seen, that he spoke to them to the same purpose again, and they told him it was nothing but his phantasie. But he was so fully persuaded of the reality of the apparition, that he told two others of it, and it came to the ears of Mr. Reading, justice of peace in Surrey, and cousin to the gentleman that was murdered.

"He immediately sent for the prisoner, and asked him in the first place, whether he was born or had lived about Guildford? To which he answered, No. Secondly, he inquired if he knew any of the inhabitants of that town, or of the neighbourhood? He replied that he was a stranger to all thereabout. Then he inquired, if he had ever heard of one Mr. Bower? He said, No. After this he examined him for what cause those two other men were imprisoned? To which he answered, he knew not, but supposed for some robbery.

"After these preliminary interrogatories, he desired him to tell him what he had seen in the night? Which he immediately did, exactly according to the relation he (Mr. Reading) had heard, and I gave before. And withal described the old gentleman so by his picked beard, and that he was, as he called it, rough on his cheeks, and that the hairs of his face were black and white, that Mr. Reading saith, he himself could not have given a more exact description of Mr. Bower than this was. He told the highwayman that he must give him his oath (though that would signify little from such a rogue), to which the man readily consented, and took oath before the justice of all this.

"Mr. Reading being a very discreet man, concealed the story from the jury at the assizes, as knowing that this would be no evidence according to law. However, the friends of the murdered gentleman had been very inquisitive, and discovered several suspicious circumstances. One of which was, that those two men had washed their clothes, and that some stains of blood remained. Another, that one of them had denied he ever heard that Mr. Bower was dead, where as he had in another place confest it two hours before. Upon these and such-like evidences, these two were condemned and executed, but denied it to the last. But one of them said, the other could clear him if he would, which the by-standers understood not.

"After some time a tinker was hanged (where, the gentleman has forgot), who at his death said, that the murder of Mr. Bower of Guildford was his greatest trouble. For he had a hand in it; he confesseth he struck him a blow on the back which fetcht him from his horse, and when he was down, those other men that were arraigned and executed for it, cut his throat and rifled him. This is the first story which I had from Mr. Reading himself, who is a very honest, prudent person, and not credulous."

In the same repertory is contained an account of the apparition of Edward Avon, of Marlborough, which was seen by his son-in-law, Thomas Goddard, of the same place, about nine o'clock in the morning, leaning over a stile on the highway between Marlborough and Ogborn. Goddard had a good deal of conversation with the ghost on family matters. It appeared to him several times, and in different places; looked in upon him at seven o'clock of a November evening, through his shop-window, and met him as he rode down the hill on the way from Chilton, "between the Manor-house and Axford farm-field," in the shape of "somewhat like a hare," at which his horse started, and threw him in the dirt: on getting on his feet again, after this fall, he saw the ghost in its proper shape, standing about eight feet directly before him in the way, and it said to him, "Thomas, bid William Avon (that was the ghost's son) take the sword that he hath of me, which is now in his house, and carry it to the wood as ye go to Alton, to the upper end of the wood by the wayside; for with that sword I did wrong above thirty years ago, and he never prospered since he had that sword." Then, after various other directions about family affairs, the spirit vanished.

Goddard went to the mayor of Marlborough, and made a formal deposition of the above circumstances. The mayor ordered him to do as the apparition had directed; and the next morning, at nine o'clock, he and his brother-in-law, William Avon, went with the sword, and laid it down in the copse, near the place the ghost had appointed Goddard to carry it. As they left the spot, Goddard again saw the apparition of Edward Avon, standing by the place where the sword was laid, and called out to his brother-in-law, "There is the apparition of our father!" William Avon said he saw nothing; upon which, Goddard fell on his knees, and prayed, "Lord! open his eyes that he may see it;" to which the other, instead of "Amen," responded, "Lord! grant I may not see it, if it be thy blessed will." The apparition then beckoned to Goddard, and said, "Thomas, take up the sword, and follow me." Goddard took up the sword, and followed the apparition about ten perches further into the copse, where he laid down the sword again. At this time he saw something stand by the apparition, like a mastiff dog, of a brown colour. On Goddard's laying down the sword, the apparition took it up, and going a few paces farther, pointed with it to the ground, and said, "In this place lies buried the body of him whom I murdered in the year 1635 (thirty-nine years before), which is now rotten, and turned to dust." Goddard asked him why he had committed this murder, and the ghost said, "I took money from the man, and he contended with me, and so I murdered him." Then Goddard said, "What would you have me do in this thing?" and the ghost said, "This is that the world may know that I murdered a man, and buried him in this place in the year 1635."

The place to which the ghost pointed was a dry and bare spot, on which nothing grew, and which, as Goddard described it, was like a grave sunk-in." As the two brothers-in-law went away together, Avon confessed to Goddard that he had heard the voice of the ghost, but had neither been able to distinguish the words, nor to see the speaker.

Against the credit of this story, Mr. Glanvil mentions two things that were alleged by people in Marlborough, who knew Thomas Goddard; that first, about a year before he saw, or affirmed he had seen, his father-in-law's apparition, he left off going to church (of which he had been a diligent frequenter), and "fell off wholly to the nonconformists;" and the other, that he was sometimes troubled with epileptic fits. But to these reasons Mr. Glanvil does not allow much weight; observing, that a man's falling-off to the nonconformists, though it may argue a vacillancy of his judgment, yet affords not any presumption of a defect in his external senses, as if a dissenter were less able to discern when he saw or heard anything than a sound churchman. In this we agree with Mr. Glanvil: it is not sight that a dissenter wants, but faith. As to the epileptic fits, our own opinion is, that Goddard's liability to these was the very thing that made him also capable of seeing ghosts. However, our author will not say positively but what the apparition may have been "some ludicrous goblin," personating the ghost of old Avon, merely to mystify, or "take a rise out of" the son-in-law. For Porphyrius has noted, that demons do sometimes personate the souls of the deceased; and the learned Von Meyer of Frankfurt confirms this by many instances within his own experience. It ought to be observed that there were no bones found in the place pointed out by the spectre, but this, after forty years or nigh, is not surprising.

Here follows a story "Of a Dutchman that could see ghosts, and of the ghost he saw in the town of Woodbridge, in Suffolk":—

"Mr. Broom, the minister of Woodbridge in Suffolk, meeting one day, in a barber's shop, in that town, a Dutch lieutenant (who was blown up with Opdam, and taken alive out of the water, and carried to that town, where he was a prisoner at large), upon the occasion of some discourse, was told by him that he could see ghosts, and that he had seen divers. Mr. Broom rebuking him for talking so idly, he persisted in it very stiffly. Some days after, lighting upon him again, he askt him whether he had seen any ghost since his coming to that town? To which he replyed, 'No.'

"But not long after this, as they were walking together up the town, he said to Mr. Broom, 'Yonder comes a ghost.' He seeing nothing, askt him whereabout it was? The other said, 'It is over against such a house, and it walks looking upwards towards such a side, swinging one arm, with a glove in its hand.' He said, moreover, that when it came near them, they must give way to it; that he ever did so, and some that have not done so have suffered for it. Anon he said, ''Tis just upon us; let's out of the way.' Mr. Broom, believing all to be a fiction, as soon as he said these words, took hold of his arm, and kept him by force in the way. But as he held him, there came such a force against them, that he was flung into the middle of the street, and one of the palms of his hands, and one knee, bruised and broken by the fall, which put him for a while to excessive pain.

"But spying the lieutenant lye like a dead man, he got up as soon as he could, and applied himself to his relief. With the help of others he got him into the next shop, where they poured strong water down his throat, but for some time could discern no life in him. At length, what with the strong water, and what with well chafing him, he began to stir, and when he was come to himself, his first words were, 'I will show you no more ghosts.' Then he desired a pipe of tobacco, but Mr. Broom told him he should take it at his house; for he feared, should he take it so soon there, it would make him sick.

"Thereupon they went together to Mr. Broom's house, where they were no sooner entering in, but the bell rang out. Mr. Broom presently sent his maid to learn who was dead. She brought word that it was such a one, a taylor, who dyed suddenly, though he had been in a consumption a long time. And inquiring after the time of his death, they found it was as punctually as it could be guessed at the very time when the ghost appeared. The ghost had exactly this taylor's known gate, who ordinarily went with one arm swinging, and a glove in that hand, and looking on one side upwards."

In a story of a butler in Ireland, who was like to have been carried away by spirits, because he went out to buy cards for his master on a Sunday afternoon, the most remarkable point is, that he "was perceived to rise from the ground, whereupon Mr. Greatrix (Valentine Greatrix, or Greatrakes, of Cappoquin, the famous magnetizer of the seventeenth century) and another lusty man clapt their arms over his shoulders, one of them before him and the other behind, and weighed him down with all their strength. But he was forcibly taken up from them, and they were too weak to keep their hold; and for a considerable time he was carried in the air to and fro over their heads, several of the company still running under him to prevent his being hurt if he should fall, and was caught before he came to the ground, and had by that means no hurt." This took place at the house and in the presence of the Earl of Orrery.

Another curious point in this case is, that a spectre came to this butler at night, bringing with it a grey liquor in a wooden dish, which it bid him drink off (as a cure for fits that he had), but he would not. At this the spectre was angry, and upbraided him with his suspicious temper; but told him if he would drink plantain-juice, it would cure him of one sort of his fits (for he had two), but he should carry the other to his grave. He asked whether he should take the juice of the roots or the leaves, and received answer, the roots.

Sophron, in that book about the "Unseen World," refers to this story, and condemns it as tending to "corporealize our notions of spirits." But this seems to be said without due reflection; for, first, we ought to ask, whence are our "notions of spirits" derived, that we should make agreement with them the test of facts? And then, it is not a very reasonable doctrine that a spirit, which can move a body, cannot move anything that the body can move.

The floating of persons, who are under spiritual influence, in the air, is no uncommon phenomenon. We have been informed by an eye-witness, that one of the ladies at Port-Glasgow, who "spoke with tongues" in the year 1830, flew about the room in which the prophesyings were held, for some time, without touching the floor. A similar phenomenon is the riding of witches through the air to their sabbath. On which subject, Doctor Antony Horneck, a weighty divine of the seventeenth century, speaks as follows:—

> "That a spirit can lift up men and women, and grosser substances, and convey them through the air, I question no more than I doubt that the wind can overthrow houses, or drive stones and other heavy bodies upward from their centre. And were I to make a person of a dull understanding apprehend the nature of a spirit, I would represent it to him under the notion of an intelligent wind, or a strong wind, informed by a highly rational soul—as a man may be called an intelligent piece of earth. And this notion David seemed to favour, when speaking of these creatures, Psalm civ. 4, he tells us that God makes his angels wind, for in the original it is רוח; and most certainly if they be so, they must be reasonable windy substances; nor doth the expression which immediately follows in that verse cross this exposition—viz., that he makes his ministers a flaming fire; for it's no new opinion that some of those invisible substances are of a fiery, and others of an aiery nature: and as we, God gives rational creatures here on earth, bodies composed of grosser matter, why should it seem incongruous for him to give rational creatures above us bodies of a subtiler and thinner matter, or such matter as those higher regions do afford? And if wind, breaking forth from the caverns of hills and mountains, have such force as makes us very often stand amazed at the effects, what energy might we suppose to be in wind, were it informed by reason, or a reasonable being?"

A curious thing happened in the year 1659, at Crossen in Silesia, of an apothecary's servant. The chief magistrate of that town at that time was the Princess Elizabeth Charlotte, a person famous in her generation. In the spring of the year, one Christopher Monigk, a native of Serbest, a town belonging to the princes of Anhalt, servant to an apothecary, died, and was buried with the usual ceremonies of the Lutheran church. A few days after his decease, a shape exactly like his in face, clothes, stature, mien, &c., appeared in the apothecary's shop, where he would set himself down, and walk sometimes, and take the boxes, pots, glasses off of the shelves, and set them again in their places, and sometimes try and examine the goodness of the medicines, weigh them in a pair of scales, pound the drugs with a mighty noise in a mortar, nay serve the people that came with their bills to the shop, take their money, and lay it up safe in the counter; in a word, do all things that a journeyman in such cases used to do. He looked very ghastly upon those that had been his fellow-servants, who were afraid to say anything to him, and his master being sick at that time of the gout, he was often very troublesome to him, would take the bills that were brought him out of his hand, snatch away the candle sometimes, and put it behind the stove. At last, he took a cloak that hung in the shop, put it on and walked abroad; but minding nobody in the streets, went along, entered into some of the citizens' houses, and thrust himself into company, especially of such as he had formerly known, yet saluted nobody, nor spoke to any one but to a maid-servant, whom he met hard by the church-yard, and desired to go home to his master's house, and dig in a ground-chamber, where she would find an inestimable treasure; but the maid, amazed at the sight of him, swooned; whereupon he lift her up, but left such a mark on her flesh with lifting her, that it was to be seen for some time after. The maid having recovered herself, went home, but fell desperately sick upon it, and in her illness discovered what Monigk had said to her, and accordingly digged in the place she had named, but found nothing but an old decayed pot, with a *hæmatites* or bloodstone in it. The princess hereupon caused the young man's body to be digged up, which they found putrified, with purulent matter flowing from it, and the master being advised to remove the young man's goods, linen, clothes, and things, he left behind him when he died, out of the house, the spirit thereupon left the house, and was heard of no more.

Another curious thing happened in 1673, at Reichenbach in Silesia, in which also an apothecary was concerned, who after his death appeared to divers of his acquaintance, and cried out that in his lifetime he had poisoned several men with his drugs. Thereupon the magistrates of the town, after consultation, took up his body and burnt it; which being done, the spirit disappeared, and was seen no more. This was stated to Doctor Anthony Horneck by a very credible witness.

Webster, a writer against the existence of witches and apparitions, has recorded a story which makes strongly against his own views, and which he nevertheless seems to believe. It is quoted out of his "Display of Supposed Witchcraft," in Doctor H. More's letter to Mr. Glanvil, prefixed to *Saducismus Triumphatus,* and is as follows:—

"About the year of our Lord 1632, near unto Chester-in-the-Street, there lived one Walker, a yeoman-man of good estate, and a widower, who had a young woman to his kinswoman that kept his house, who was by the neighbours suspected to be with child, and was, towards the dark of the evening, one night sent away with one Mark Sharp, who was a collier, or one that digged coals under ground, and one that had been born in Blackburn Hundred, in Lancashire, and so she was not heard of a long time, and no noise or little was made about it. In the winter time after, one James Graham, or Grime (for so in that country they call them), being a miller, and living about two miles from the place where Walker lived, was one night alone very late in the mill, grinding corn; and as about twelve or one o'clock at night, he came down the stairs from having been putting corn in the hopper, the mill doors being shut, there stood a woman upon the midst of the floor, with her hair about her head hanging down and all bloody, with five large wounds in her head. He being much affrighted and amazed, began to bless him, and at last asked her who she was, and what she wanted? To which she said, 'I am the spirit of such a woman, who lived with Walker; and being got with child by him, he promised to send me to a private place, where I should be well looked to till I was brought to bed and well again, and then I should come again and keep his house.

"'And accordingly,' said the apparition, 'I was one night late sent away with one Mark Sharp, who, upon a moor (naming a place that the miller knew) slew me with a pick (such as men dig coals withal), and gave me those five wounds, and after threw my body into a coal-pit hard by, and hid the pick under a bank, and his shoes and stockings being bloody, he endeavoured to wash, but seeing the blood would not wash forth, he hid them there.' And the apparition further told the miller that he must be the man to reveal it, or else that she must still appear and haunt him. The miller returned home very sad and heavy, but spoke not one word of what he had seen, but eschewed as much as he could to stay in the mill within night without company, thinking thereby to escape the seeing again of that frightful apparition.

"But notwithstanding, one night when it began to be dark, the apparition met him again, and seemed very fierce and cruel, and threatened him, that if he did not reveal the murder, she would certainly pursue and haunt him. Yet for all this, he still concealed it until St. Thomas's Eve, before Christmas, when being, soon after sunset, walking in his garden, she appeared again, and then so threatened and affrighted him, that he faithfully promised to reveal it next morning.

"In the morning he wrote to a magistrate, and made the whole matter known, with all the circumstances: and diligent search being made, the body was found in a coal-pit, with five wounds in the head, and the pick, and shoes, and stockings yet bloody, in every circumstance as the apparition had related unto the miller. Whereupon Walker and Mark Sharp were both apprehended, but would confess nothing. At the assizes following (I think it was Durham) they were arraigned, found guilty, condemned, and executed, but I could never hear that they confessed the fact. There were some that reported that the apparition did appear to the judge, or the foreman of the jury (who was alive in Chester-in-the-Street about ten years ago, as I have been credibly informed), but of that I know no certainty.

"There are many persons yet alive that can remember this strange murder, and the discovery of it; for it was, and sometimes is, as much discoursed of in the north country as anything that almost hath ever been heard of, and the relation printed, though now not to be gotten. I relate this with the greater confidence, (though I may fail in some of the circumstances), because I saw and read the letter that was sent to Serjeant Hutton, who then lived at Goldsbrugh, in Yorkshire, from the judge before whom Walker and Mark Sharp were tried, and by whom they were condemned, and had a copy of it until about the year 1658, when I had it and many other books and papers taken from me. And this I confess to be one of the most convincing stories (being of undoubted verity) that ever I read, heard, or knew of, and carrieth with it the most evident force to make the most incredulous spirit to be satisfied that there are really sometimes such things as apparitions."

Doctor Henry More thought this story so "considerable," that he mentioned it to a friend of his, a prudent intelligent person, Dr. J. D., who, of his own accord, offered him, it being a thing of such consequence, to send to a friend of his in the north for greater assurance of the truth of the narration, which motion, he, (Dr. H. M.,) willingly embracing, he (Dr. J. D.) accordingly sent. The answer to his letter, from his friend, Mr. Shepherdson, was this:—

"I have done what I can to inform myself of the passage of Sharp and Walker. There are very few men that I could meet, that were then men, or at the tryal, saving these two in the enclosed paper, both men at that time, and both at the tryal. And for Mr. Lumley, he lived next door to Walker; and what he hath given under his hand, can depose, if there were occasion. The other gentleman writ his attestation with his own hand, but I being not there, got not his name to it. I could have sent you twenty hands that could have said thus much, and more, by hear-say, but I thought these most proper, that could speak from their own eyes and ears."

Thus far, Mr. Shepherdson, the doctor's discreet and faithful intelligencer. Now for Mr. Lumley's testimony, it is this:—

"Mr. William Lumley, of Lumley, being an ancient gentleman, and at the tryal of Walker and Sharp, upon the murder of Anne Walker, saith—That he doth very well remember that the said Anne was servant to Walker, and that she was supposed to be with child, but would not disclose by whom. But, being removed to her aunt's in the same town, called Dame Carie, told her aunt that he that had got her with child would take care both of her and it, and bid her not trouble herself. After some time she had been at her aunt's, it was observed that Sharp came to Lumley one night, being a sworn brother of the said Walker's, and they two, that night, called her forth from her aunt's house, which night she was murdered.

"About fourteen days after the murder, there appeared to one Graime, a fuller, at his mill, six miles from Lumley, the likeness of a woman, with her hair about her head, and the appearance of five wounds in her head, as the said Graime gave it in evidence. That that appearance bid him go to a justice of peace, and relate to him how that Walker and Sharp had murdered her, in such a place as she was murdered; but he, fearing to disclose a thing of that nature against a person of credit, as Walker was, would not have done it; but she continually appearing night by night to him, and pulling the cloathes off his bed, told him he should never rest till he had disclosed it. Upon which, the said Graime did go to a justice of peace, and related the whole matter. Whereupon the justice of peace granted warrants against Walker and Sharp, and committed them to prison. But they found bail to appear at the next assizes. At which time they came to their tryal, and upon the evidence of the circumstances with that of Graime of the apparition, they were both found guilty, and executed.

"William Lumley."

"The other testimony is of Mr. James Smart, of the city of Durham, who saith—That the tryal of Sharp and Walker was in the month of August, 1631, before Judge Davenport. One Mr. Fairhair gave it in evidence upon oath, that he see the likeness of a child stand upon Walker's shoulders during the time of the tryal. At which time the judge was very much troubled, and gave sentence that night the tryal was; which was a thing never used in Durham before, nor after."

There is a difference of opinion between Mr. Webster and Dr. Henry More, as to the nature of this apparition—the former holding it to have been the "astral spirit of Anne

Walker; the other deriding this as a fantastic conceit of the Paracelsists, and insisting that it was her soul. Perhaps the two opinions are not irreconcilable. However, we will not stop to reconcile them here, but relate one more story, and let the reader go to bed.

Some years ago, when travelling in Germany, it was our fortune to make the acquaintance of a Roman Catholic clergyman, who was the subject of a most strange and frightful spiritual visitation. In the year 1838, he had been appointed to a village parish, and entered upon his work with an ardour that distinguished him in all his pursuits. The first night that he spent in his own residence, he could not sleep; hour after hour, he lay tossing on his restless bed, and rose in the morning without having closed an eye. He attributed this, however, to the excitement of his spirits, the strange bed, the fatigue of his journey—in short, to any cause but what proved to be the true one. The second night came, and he rested no better: the third and the fourth equally failed to bring him repose. He changed his hour of going to bed, worked hard during the day, did everything possible to win sleep to his pillow, but in vain. It might be on the seventh or the eighth night that he felt, as he lay feverishly turning from side to side, something sitting, as he thought, on the side of his bed. He sat up, groped with his hand over the bed-coverings, to the place where the pressure seemed to be, and was sensible of something that yielded to a push, but immediately after returned to its former place. He got up, and lighted a candle; there was nothing to be seen on the bed, nothing to be found in the room, that could have been the cause of his sensations. He lay down again, leaving the light burning, and now first did a superstitious awe steal over him, when he felt the weight on the bed-side as before, while his eyes assured him that nothing visible occupied the place. Of sleep there was now no hope, and not only for that night, but for many following, till the health of the man, thus at once deprived of his natural rest, and pursued by the terrors of an invisible world, began perceptibly to give way. This had gone on about a fortnight, when he began to see something. It was the shape of a woman veiled from head to foot, as it seemed, in a grey mist, sitting on the bed. The haunted man began to fear for his reason; he wrote to Schubert, to Doctor Kerner, to Professor Eschenmayer, to every one he could hear of, as versed in the secrets of psychology; he detailed his sufferings; he supplicated help. As might be expected, the correspondence had no result but that of rendering the case more hopeless. The sufferer travelled from one master of the mystic science to another; and it was while on a visit to Schubert that we became acquainted with him. Of course all that could be done for him was done, and amounted to just—nothing. He returned in despair to his parish; and, to put the reality of the apparition to a new test, he spoke to it. It answered. He related this to his friends; they smiled, and said his poetical temperament was carrying him too far. More than one said, "Send your spectre to me; if there be anything in her, I'll find it out." He promised to do so, and kept his promise. Sleep, so long a stranger, revisited his bed; but the next morning, the rash inviter was sure to come, and say, one visit was enough for him, a second such night would drive him frantic. The niece of the clergyman, who was his housekeeper, a good-hearted and religious girl, heard of this, and begged her uncle to send her the apparition: he did it from time to time, to have a night's sleep. The phantom-lady, in all her visits to others, kept silence; no one but the clergyman ever heard her speak; perhaps, because no one else had the courage to speak to her. But *what* she said to him, he could never be induced to tell. So stood the matter when we were brought into contact with him: as, for aught we know, it stands to this hour. From other sources we have learned that he often passes his night in the open air, to evade the dreaded visitation, unwilling to lay too heavy a tax on the self-sacrificing affections of his niece. At such times, his village-parishioners often lie awake till the dawn, listening with a heart-clutching fear to the unearthly tones which his voice and his guitar conspire to send forth into the shuddering night.

THE FATAL BRIDE.

BEING A SECOND CONTRIBUTION FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF A BACHELOR.

I AM now an old man, and, what is perhaps less excusable, an old bachelor too; and yet, sir, I am not a bachelor of *malice prepense*—I am no profane railer against wedlock. I would not, for my grandmother's enamel *bonbonniere*, which catches my eye this moment, nor for my honoured uncle's silver-mounted and inlaid steel barrels—both of them family reliques dear in their own several ways—that your fair readers should set me down as guilty of premeditated and deliberate celibacy. No such thing. I have more than once narrowly escaped—I should say *missed* — the fate-matrimonial, and that by pure accident — by no cowardice or perfidy of mine. No; my tendencies were all conjugal — my blessedness, however, has been single; and so far am I from thanking my stars, or taking merit to myself for this state of things, that, sooth to say, even the seventy-and-five winters and summers that have bleached and baked me in succession, still find me, now and then, sighing over the tender recollections and bitter disappointments, which are now for me, the sad and only reliques of the romance of early days.

But though I have had my passages of love, as well as those of the sterner passions, in my day; and though I sometimes take a whim to rummage among old trinkets, lockets, and likenesses, each of them to me a little history in itself, yet I would not have you suppose me a superannuated sentimentalist either. No, sir. I have my tender, and, jesting aside, my melancholy retrospections; but I have also my pleasant, and, even at this time of day, my exciting recollections, too. I would be almost ashamed to tell you how often it comes to pass, that, my solitary pint of old port finished, I find myself sunk in my comfortable, ancient, leathern chair, gazing between my knees into the clear red embers, between which and me are rising and floating, like mystic shapes from an enchanted caldron, the forms and faces long lost to life, which have mingled in the mazes of early adventure; and some of whom have left upon my time-chilled heart, traces that eternity itself, mayhap, will fail to obliterate.

Thus it is, that in long winter's evenings, as I sit alone and musing, memory calls up, with chastened colouring and softened outline, the chequered past before me. Passive, as though the pageant were the creation of some Prospero, and I his wondering visitor, I sit by and see, while memory and association crowd my vision with their filmy troops, fragments of old adventure, and glimpses of thrilling scenes, with all their actors duly accoutred, and looking just as they did—how many years ago! The light-hearted and the moody — the loved and the worthless — the prosperous and the ruined—the changed, and the dead and gone—all, in defiance of time and death, take their old places, and wear their old looks and liveries, as they drift by me in sad and wayward procession. Leaving these recollections to themselves, to rise, and shift, and unroll before my listless gaze, as chance, or some unknown law of suggestion wills it, it often happens that strange occurrences, and striking and mournful histories, which had passed from my ordinary remembrances, are thrown up again, like long-buried treasures from the restless sea, and startle me almost with the vividness of novelty.

It may be, that feeling, in most of these stories, that interest which attaches to an acquaintance with the individuals who have taken a part in them, I am unduly predisposed to exaggerate the degree of favour with which an ordinary reader may be presumed to regard them. Incidents well worth recording, as having happened to my lord or lady this, that, or t'other, may yet prove dull enough in the abstract, and unsupported by the borrowed importance of the aforesaid distinguished titles. But whatever interest I might have thrown over these pages, by particularizing individuals, and publishing real names, I feel bound

—in some cases by humanity, in others by honour, but in *all* effectually—to forego. A *chronique scandaleuse* is not quite the thing for your respectable pages, nor, independently of other and higher considerations, are the tease and worry to which such authorship would expose your humble servant, quite the thing for an easy old bachelor, who has not handled a pistol in anger for full five-and-thirty years, who wishes well to all mankind, and hates trouble, almost as much as law or bloodshed.

The tales I send you, therefore, shall not record the *names* of those whose acts, follies, or sufferings, they recite. In all other respects they shall be faithful narratives of fact—in this alone fictitious. They may prove wondrous dull, as old men's stories sometimes do. Of their merits, I am, for every reason, the worst possible judge. Decide, then, yourself—put them into your Magazine or into your fire, just as your critical acumen shall determine. As for me, I prize my snug obscurity too justly to aspire to literary honours, or to participate in literary resentments. Blot, burn, or print, just as you please; I have nothing of the *genus irritabile*, except, perhaps, some symptoms of the *cacoëthes scribendi* about me. I perceive, indeed, with complacency, that you have admitted my former contribution to a place in your November number; this has determined me to despatch another, which, with like encouragement, may be followed by a third, and so on; I, all the while, with your good leave, maintaining my incognito, and despatching my scribblings through that mysterious agency, the penny-post. Should you cease to hear from me, without sufficient apparent cause for the suspension of my correspondence; should, I say, this series—for such, with your permission, I mean to make it—be abruptly and finally cut short, why then you may conclude that the "brief candle," in whose flickering light I ply this my self-imposed task, has at last gone out, and left your old and unknown correspondent to the darkness and repose to which time is hurrying us all.

With these few preliminary remarks, now offered once for all, I shall end the tedious task of introduction, and plunge at once into the business of my story, merely reiterating, by way of supplemental caution, that names and titles, and a few details of locality, which I fancied might indicate individuals, and lead to detection, have been suppressed and altered; but that in the substance, and, indeed, with those exceptions, in all the minor details of these narratives, I shall observe a strict adherence to the facts, as they were either related to me, or came within my own personal knowledge.

The story which I am about to relate, carries me back somewhere about half a century; at which time, it is needless to say, Dublin was, in point of society, a very different city from what it now is. It had then a resident aristocracy, and one whose equipages and housekeeping were maintained upon a scale which put plebeian competition wholly out of the question. I do not mean to offer any ungracious reflections upon the existing state of Dublin society. We have now, alas! more tuft-hunters than tufts to boast of; magnificent pretensions, based, like the Brahmin's world, nobody can exactly say upon what, strive and strain to fill the void, which a legitimate aristocracy have left; and men, whose grandfathers—but what matters it? the thing is after all but natural. What was a metropolis, is a capital no longer; and it is but lost time sighing after the things that once were, or snarling at those that are.

At the time of which I speak, there resided in Dublin a certain worthy baronet, whom I shall call Sir Arthur Chadleigh. He was then considerably past sixty, and was a venerable monument of what was called hard living, in all its departments. He had been, until gout disabled him, a knowing gentleman on the turf; he was a deep player and a deep drinker, and covered, with an exterior of boisterous jollity, a very cold and selfish heart. He was thoroughly a man of the world, and what was then an essential ingredient in that amiable character, whenever occasion prompted, a very determined duellist. Whatever good nature he was possessed of, was expended upon society at large. In his dealings with his own family, he was arbitrary and severe; and if he did possess any natural affections, he had managed to get them all admirably under control, and never was known, under any circumstances, to suffer from their over-indulgence. This old gentleman had been blessed, in his prime, with an helpmate; but Lady Chadleigh, having been, in her own way, about as domestic a person as Sir Arthur, one fine morning, at three o'clock precisely, when her spouse was entering upon his fourth bottle of claret in the parlour, absconded with young Lord Kildalkin. The happy pair were overtaken at Havre by the baronet, who, at ten paces, duly measured, shot off Kildalkin's thumb—a feat which satisfied his honour, as some of the sterner brethren of the hair-trigger averred, at much too reasonable a rate. The worthy baronet, however, on his return, explained satisfactorily to a select circle of friends. "For," said he, "had I shot him through the head, I should not have known what the —— to do with Lady C." As it was, he left his wife in the hands of his rival, as a moderate equivalent for the joint.

Lady Chadleigh had not been cruel enough to leave her lord without some objects on which to exercise those domestic virtues, for which he was so justly celebrated. She had been just five years married, when she took her departure, as I have stated; and she left behind her, for the consolation of her spouse, along with an extensive assortment of macaws, avadavats, lap-dogs, and other sundries, three children—two sons and a girl. The macaws, &c., were easily disposed of, but there was no getting rid of the children; so Sir Arthur called in a grim old spinster sister, who, for fourteen years, dating from that day, presided at the baronet's tea-table, and ruled his little flock. At the end of this period she died, and much about the same time died also the unfortunate Lady Chadleigh, forsaken and heart-broken, in some obscure town in France.

Lady Chadleigh's name had been proscribed—in Sir Arthur's presence none dared to mention it; and, with the exception of little Mary, the daughter who, since infancy, had never seen her, no human being appeared to feel the smallest concern about the event. Little Mary Chadleigh, however, felt it deeply; with the yearnings of unavailing affection, she had always clung to the idea, that some time or other her mother would come back, and be fond of her. The reasons of the separation were, of course, wholly unknown to her, and her childish eagerness to learn something of her mother, had been systematically repulsed with a mysterious discouragement, in which she had come gradually to acquiesce. But though she had long learned to look upon her mother's absence as in some way a necessary and unavoidable privation, and even as a natural thing, and a matter of course, which scarcely required to be accounted for, yet her mind had been constantly busied with the one thought, that at last she would return, and love her as she wished to be loved. And now came these strange tidings, never looked for in her childish dreams, and these black dresses, to tell her that all the little plans and hopes that had silently fluttered her innocent heart so many a time for so many years, must end for ever; that the being for whose return she had been watching and wishing ever since she could remember, was never to come again. This was a sore shock to the poor girl, and she wept, in the solitude of her chamber, over this, to her, most bitter calamity, with a vehemence of grief and a sense of desolation, which, to one unacquainted with the cherished reveries, the castle-building of the heart, which had been her secret happiness from earliest childhood, would have been unaccountable.

Years passed on—new objects and associations began to fill her reveries; her secret sorrow wore away, and this early grief became but a sad, and scarcely unpleasing remembrance. I was a very young man when first I saw Miss Chadleigh, and I have seldom been so much struck by any combination of beauty, grace, and expression, as when she entered the room at one of Lady ——'s balls. She was at this time about nineteen, beautifully formed, and with the bearing of natural nobility; her complexion was clear, and rather pale; her eyes dark and lustrous; and her features, as I thought, exquisitely beautiful. The prevailing expression of her face was melancholy, with perhaps some slight character of haughtiness; but when she smiled, there was such a rippling of dimples, such an arch merriment in her lovely eyes, and such a revelation of little, even, pearly teeth, as made her perfectly enchanting. "Well," thought I, as I watched with absolute fascination the movements of this lovely being, "if beauty the most enchanting be any longer the potent influence it once was, there is no scheme of ambition to whose realization such loveliness as yours may not aspire." How little did I dream of what was coming!

I was so much attracted—my interest and attention so irresistibly engaged, by this beautiful girl, that I observed her, with scarcely any intermission, during the entire evening. It would be ridiculous to say that I was actually in love; I was not absurd or romantic enough (which you will) to get up a sentimental and hopeless passion at a moment's notice, and that, too, without having exchanged one word with the object of my aspirations. No such thing. The feeling with which I gazed on Miss Chadleigh, was one of the profoundest admiration, I admit, yet untinctured with any, the least, admixture of actual tenderness. I observed her with the deep and silent pleasure with which beauty of the highest order may be contemplated, without the smallest danger to the heart; and, indeed, of the philosophical nature of my admiration, I had full assurance in the fact, that I remarked, with hardly one flutter of jealousy, the attentions, evidently not ill-received, which were devotedly paid her by a singularly handsome young officer, in a perfectly irresistible cavalry uniform. This gentleman was the afterwards too-celebrated Captain Jennings.

That evening remains impressed upon my memory with the vividness —what do I say?—with fifty times the vividness of yesterday. I think I see old Sir Arthur now, as he sat at the whist-table, with his crutch beside him—for gout had claimed him as its own—his fiery face and heavy brows, overcast with the profound calculations of his favourite game, and his massive frame, shaking all over with the stentorian chuckle with which he greeted the conclusion of each successful rubber, while he slyly pocketed the guineas, and rallied and quizzed his discomfited opponents, with ferocious good-humour. I looked at this old man with some curiosity. I had never seen him before, and in his past life were not a few passages of vicissitude, daring, and adventure, such as might well warrant that qualified degree of interest which, as a young man, I not unnaturally felt in him. As I observed this hero of a hundred stories in the gossip of the day—his massive, but now crippled form—his bloated face, in which few could have traced a vestige of the handsome traits which rumour assigned to his early youth, and upon which, in the intervals of his tempestuous good-humour, I thought I could clearly discover the stamp of those sterner and imperious attributes with which general report had invested him;—as I looked on this fierce, crafty, intemperate, but at the same time, strangely enough, by no means unpopular man of the world, it was impossible to avoid the trite but natural contrast which, in a thousand such cases, is forced upon the mind, as often as, turning from him, my eye rested upon his beautiful child. How could a creature so exquisitely lovely, so accomplished in every natural grace—and, if expression might be trusted, at once so refined, so noble, and so sensitive—have ever sprung from a root so gnarled, bitter, and unsightly! Yet his child she doubtless was; for the world, with all its jealous and censorious curiosity, had never once questioned the parentage of Sir Arthur's children, and in this the world was right. For poor Lady Chadleigh had begun her married life a good and faithful wife, and under circumstances less unhappy, might have been pure and honoured to the last. But the insults of callous profligacy had alienated and exasperated a heart at once proud and impetuous. She had been a spoiled child, and became a ruined woman. Habitually ungoverned, she was incapable of forbearance. With little principle and less prudence, she suffered a restless sense of wrong to hurry her into extravagances of conduct—intended, but without effect, to pique Sir Arthur, and wound at least his pride into jealousy; and in this mad enterprise the unhappy woman had at last effectually compromised herself, and was forced to the terrible necessity of flight. Her fall was not that of an impure, but of a vengeful spirit. It was the act of a bitter and passionate suicide, who would squander fifty lives to bring home one pang of remorse, or any other feeling, to the heart of callous indifference. Poor thing! the world understood her character, and despised her; for want of a due contempt for Sir Arthur's apathy, and a proper acquiescence in his profligate courses, she had given herself to ruin.

"Who is that officer," I asked a friend, whom accident brought close to me in the crowded room—"that good-looking fellow, who has been so marked in his devotions to Miss Chadleigh all the evening?"

"Oh! that—don't you know?" he replied. "Why that is Captain Jennings—Jennings the *aid-de-camp*—a devilish handsome fellow; the women are quite mad about him, and he knows it."

"Miss Chadleigh appears intimate with him," I observed.

"Yes, so she is; he was a friend of young Chadleigh's, who died, or was taken in some battle in India," he answered.

"So, one of her brothers is dead, then?" I interrupted.

"Yes; I believe the native army made him a prisoner, and treated him in the usual way," replied he. "I heard the particulars; they were deuced horrid; but I don't quite recollect them now."

"And, Miss Chadleigh—has not she a second brother?" I inquired.

"A second brother! Yes," he answered. "A pleasant fellow; but a perfect devil for wildness. She was fond of the other brother, and in a sad way, I believe, when the news came; but that is a year and a-half since. There, now, you can see young Chadleigh—the young man going to take Miss Chadleigh away."

He nodded to indicate the party, and I followed the direction of his eye.

Young Chadleigh was a decidedly well-looking man, with a frank and rather distinguished air, and dressed with an almost foppish attention to the prevailing fashion. I had just time to observe that he and Jennings chatted familiarly for a minute or two, and appeared to be on the friendliest terms of intimacy.

"Well," thought I, "after all, he may be but a friend."

Whether it be impossible to contemplate such beauty as Miss Chadleigh's with perfect stoicism, and that, without knowing it, I was really a little jealous, I can't say; but I certainly had watched the young captain's attentions with a slight but disagreeable sense of restlessness, and experienced, I know not how, a certain relief in the reflection I had just made. It had, however, hardly visited my mind, when it was again disturbed.

Miss Chadleigh, leaning on her brother's arm, was passing so close as almost to touch me, whom she had unconsciously inspired with so much admiration, when Jennings, following, presented her with her fan, accidentally forgotten. As she took it with a gracious smile, she blushed. Yes, I could not be mistaken, for a more beautiful blush I never beheld in my existence; and, to make the matter worse, I thought I perceived that, as he placed the light weapon of coquetry in her hand, his own rested upon her's for a second longer than was strictly necessary, and in doing so conveyed the slightest possible *pressure* to her little ivory fingers. I felt, I know not how, disposed to be affronted and incensed, and actually stared, with no very inviting expression, full upon Captain Jennings, as he made his retreat, with a lurking smile of vanity and triumph on his lip. My ill-bred stare was unobserved, and I could, on reflection, scarcely help laughing at the absurdity of the emotion which had inspired it. But, after all, why should I?—the nature of the beast pervades us all. The presence of beauty is a woeful stimulus to unprovoked combativeness, and I do believe there is a lurking idea universally in the mind of man, that beauty should be, somehow, the prize of the fiercest and strongest—the

"Viribus editior ut in grege taurus."

I know it was ever the case with me—I never saw, at least in my young days, a pretty girl, without feeling a disposition to fight with somebody—and this, although, under ordinary circumstances, as peaceable a fellow as any among her majesty's liege subjects.

In pursuing this narrative, I am

forced occasionally to rely upon the report of others; in some of its oddest scenes, however, as the reader will perceive, I was present, and myself a secondary actor. What I did not myself witness, I shall, as I have said, supply from the testimony of others, and thus present your readers with a connected recital of this eccentric piece of Irish biography.

If fortune had condemned Captain Jennings to the torments of love, she was, at all events, resolved to grant him every reasonable mitigation in his distressed condition. For upwards of a month, during that summer, he had the happiness of being a guest at Lord ———'s, where Miss Chadleigh and her brother were also visitors; whether he had succeeded, or not, in making any impression upon the young lady's heart, was not then known; but as his attentions were, if possible, more marked and devoted than ever, the affair began to be talked of, and, soon after this visit terminated, was mentioned by a friend to Sir Arthur himself.

The baronet forthwith instituted inquiries respecting Captain Jennings' ways and means—the result was unsatisfactory—and, one day, as the gay young gentleman sat chatting, at an early visit, with Chadleigh and his fair sister, the old baronet hobbled into the room, and set himself down as one of the party—a procedure quite contrary to his ordinary habits. There was nothing ominous in his countenance and bearing, however; on the contrary, he seemed more than usually frank and good-humoured, shook Jennings more heartily by the hand, and laughed more boisterously at all his jokes and stories than ever he had done before. Chadleigh had already gone, and Sir Arthur having dispatched Mary to superintend some customary arrangements affecting his own comforts, the door was closed upon him and Captain Jennings.

" Jennings," said the baronet.

" Well, sir."

" You're a devilish good fellow—Jennings, a devilish pleasant fellow," said the baronet, " and I've no doubt will get on in the world—with *prudence*, that is, with *prudence*."

Jennings bowed his acknowledgments, and looked a little surprised.

" And, as it strikes me, Jennings, my boy," continued the baronet, in the same jolly tone—" about the most *im*prudent thing you could possibly do, at the outset, would be to *marry;* and marriage being out of the question in point of prudence—totally and entirely out of the question—I should not, you understand me, like to have Miss Chadleigh, my daughter, talked of in connexion with such an absurdity."

" Really, Sir Arthur," interrupted Jennings, changing colour slightly, and affecting a cool *hauteur*, which he was far from feeling—" I don't precisely know to what particular circumstances you are pleased to allude."

" Come, come, my dear fellow," said Sir Arthur, in the same tone of rough good humour, which, in all his dealings, alike with friend or foe, whether with the dice-box or the pistol, he had ever maintained—" we are, both of us, men of the world—eh? I an old, and you a young one; but both of us unquestionably men of the world, and perfectly wide awake. You know just as well as *I*, and *I* as well as *you*, what is usually termed, *paying attentions to a young lady*—let us have no shamming at either side—we both of us know this; and I don't approve of Miss Chadleigh's receiving any such distinction from *you*, my dear Jennings; and now I hope I have made myself perfectly intelligible."

Jennings bowed stiffly, and the baronet continued—

" A set of meddling old women have begun to talk, you see, and I took this, the earliest opportunity, of putting you on your guard—for, of course, it would not answer your cards either, to have such nonsense put about, and so, without anything abrupt or remarkable, your acquaintance must become cooler, and—and—more distant; and, in short, when you do happen to meet in society, the less you are thrown together, the better; in a word, my dear Jennings, your coolness must effectually give the lie to this ridiculous piece of gossip."

As Sir Arthur concluded, he was slowly rising from his seat, and having, just at its termination, established his ponderous and gouty person in an erect position, he took Jennings' hands in both his, and shaking them very cordially, said, in precisely the tone which might have conveyed a hospitable and pressing invitation—

"And, by the way, my dear Jennings, I think it would be very advisable, don't you, by way of a beginning, to put an immediate stop to these little visits—these foolish little morning calls, which make people talk, and serve no possible purpose, as matters stand, except as a very unnecessary tax upon your time; so, for the future"—here he renewed the shaking, with increasing warmth—"when we *do* meet, let it be abroad, my dear Jennings, and not here; you understand me, not on any account here; in society, of course, I shall always be delighted to meet you; we shall there, of course, be the best possible friends; and now, my dear Jennings, I think we perfectly understand one another, and I'll not waste any more of your time, for, of course, you have many more amusing ways of employing it. Good morning, Jennings, my boy—farewell."

The perfect radiation of cordiality and good humour with which this very peremptory dismissal was conveyed, was so incongruously disconcerting, that Jennings felt totally unable to resent the procedure as he felt disposed to do—for, truth to say, he was more nettled than he cared to confess, even to himself. Returning the old gentleman's salutation, therefore, stiffly and coldly enough, he withdrew, and had walked nearly half-way along the side of St. Stephen's-green (in the immediate neighbourhood of which Sir Arthur resided) before he began to recover the angry confusion of this affronting *congé*. Slackening his pace, however, he began to revolve the occurrences in his mind, and, with the resignation of necessity, began to discover many things to be grateful for among the consequences of this explanation, *brusque* and unexpected as it undoubtedly was.

"Well, well," he muttered, "it is, perhaps, much better as it is. She is a devilish fine girl, to be sure, and, I do believe, had well nigh turned my head; but, egad, I was acting like a *fool*—a —— fool, to follow her about, and get myself entangled at all—heaven knows what an infernal piece of mischief it might have ended in, if I had been left to my own foolish fancies—I'm a deuced deal a happier man, as matters stand—a *safer* one, at all events."

Jennings was a singularly handsome young man, as we have said—very vain and very selfish; he knew no control except that involved in a punctilious subservience to the code of fashionable society in which he lived; and, without any one grain of positive malevolence in his disposition, he had about him a great deal of the raw material out of which circumstances and opportunity might eventually fabricate a villain; an inconsiderate impetuosity, too often mistaken for generosity and impulsive candour; an exacting and ambitious vanity, which, ever seeking for new homage, inspired a constant desire to please—and, with the desire, stimulated the constant practice, too, of all the little arts of pleasing—and which, however despicable a passion in itself, was yet, in its effects, the prime cause of his popularity—these, combined with a constitutional selfishness which instinctively governed all his views and actions, were the leading attributes of a character—unfortunately for the dignity of human nature—commonplace enough. Externally, however, he was a very fascinating person—accomplished, elegant, agreeable, and blessed with an inexhaustible flow of gay and sparkling spirits.

Of course, it was to be presumed that Sir Arthur had conveyed to Miss Chadleigh his views respecting Jennings' attentions; and the baronet's stern and implacable severity in punishing disobedience, and enforcing compliance with his commands, was so thoroughly known and understood, that not one of his children dared openly to disobey his lightest order. Mary Chadleigh and Jennings, however, were destined often to meet—indeed it could not be otherwise, unless one or other of them had withdrawn from that gay society in which both of them mixed so freely. There was, however, a very marked change in their mutual demeanour. There was an obvious reserve on her part; though ill-natured people observed that her eyes were oftener seen following his movements in the crowded saloons than was either to be accounted for by pure accident, or altogether reconcilable with the show of coldness with which she now habitually met him. On his part, the change was also marked; instead of devoting his attentions and his time, as heretofore, whenever fortune brought them together, all but exclusively to her, he now scarcely ever exchanged a dozen sentences with her; in short, though the female world good-naturedly persisted in believing Miss Chadleigh a very ill-used, and, spite of her assumed indifference, a very devoted damsel—yet all were agreed that this affair was totally and finally at an end.

It was not very long until gossip began to busy itself once more with this young lady's name—a new suitor began to be suspected. Young Lord Dungarret, with a coronet and twelve thousand a-year at his disposal, was evidently smitten, and to such a degree, that Miss Chadleigh became ten degrees more ugly than ever in the eyes of the female world of Dublin. While matters were in this state, however, it happened that one day, as Sir Arthur sate in his chamber, damning his old enemy, the gout, in solitary suffering and ill-temper, somebody hesitatingly knocked at his chamber door.

"Come in—well?" he exclaimed, turning his mottled and gloomy visage full on the intruder.

The person who entered was old Martha, a privileged domestic of some three-score years, who had been the nurse, and was now the attendant of Mary Chadleigh, whom she absolutely idolized. "I'm come, sir, about the young mistress," she said, approaching; "for, indeed, I'm afraid she's very bad—she's very sick, sir, and I would not be easy without the doctor seeing her."

"Sick—is she?" said the baronet; "young ladies are always ailing—it's interesting, and nurses always croaking—they have nothing else to do; I wish she had half-a-day's experience of my gout—curse it—and she'd know what pain is like."

"Why, then, indeed, sir, she really is bad, and very bad, I'm afraid, this time," said the woman, with dignified emphasis. "It is not, of course, for an old woman like me, that's nothing to the darling young lady, more than just nursing her and taking care of her, to be dictating to her own father, that, of course, has more feeling for his own child than the likes of me 'id have; but all I say is, she is *really* bad, and——"

"Well, well, well—send for the doctor, to be sure, and don't plague me any more; and just tell him," he added, as the old woman reached the door, "if he finds anything seriously amiss, that I will feel much obliged by his looking in here, and telling me what he thinks of her—do you hear?"

In obedience to the summons, accordingly dispatched, Dr. Robertson, as I shall call him, then in extensive practice in Dublin, and who had been for twenty years the physician in attendance upon the family, arrived late in the evening. He was a large, good-natured man, with a rough voice, emphatic delivery, and a *brusque* and decisive manner—clear-headed and rapid—with a thorough knowledge of the world, as well as a consummate skill in his profession. With a very rough exterior, and an occasional coarseness, and even severity of expression, Dr. Robertson was, nevertheless, a kind and tender-hearted man; and these sterling qualities had served to secure him a vested interest in the practice to which his reputation had once introduced him.

It was, as I have said, late in the evening, when a peremptory double knock at the door announced the arrival of the physician. With brisk and creaking steps he followed the servant, who conducted him directly to the young lady's chamber. The house was a vast and handsome mansion; and after ascending a stone staircase, and passing a handsome lobby, he found himself in a kind of antechamber, from which the young lady's sleeping apartment opened. Here he remained for a moment, while old Martha went in to prepare her young mistress for the visit. After about a minute, she returned, and intimated that Miss Chadleigh was ready.

Doctor Robertson accordingly entered. The young lady was lying upon her bed, her face deadly pale, except where two bright spots of hectic crimson glowed with unnatural warmth; her eyes were swollen with tears, and as the physician approached, she turned away from his well-known, good-natured countenance, and hid her face in the bedclothes.

"Well, well, my dear, what is all this? Come, come, we'll make a cure of you in no time—don't fret—we'll have you well in a day or two."

Thus saying, in rough and kindly tones, he took her hand, and as he felt her pulse, continued—

"And tell me where you feel amiss—there's a good child—don't sob—don't cry—I promise you it won't signify."

"Oh, doctor," she said, with her face still averted, "I am very ill, and—and—in such wretched spirits."

Here the poor girl again burst into tears; and while she was weeping, the old nurse stole noiselessly out of the chamber, and closing the door, walked restlessly from one spot to another in the outer room we have described; now arranging a screen, now replacing a chair by the wall, now stirring the fire, but, with an abstracted and miserable look, and wringing her withered hands ever and anon in the intervals. This had gone on with little variation, except that the old woman occasionally looked with an expression of intense anxiety, and even horror, at the door which concealed her young mistress and her professional visitor from view, when at last it opened, and Doctor Robertson came out, buried, as it seemed, in profound and painful thought, and looking unusually pale and agitated; he walked, by two or three steps at a time, pausing, and occasionally shaking his head gloomily in the intervals, and sate himself down in silence before the fire, and ruminated for some minutes. At last he stood up briskly, turned his back to the fire, beckoned to the old woman, and as she approached, raised the candle, so that its light fell full upon her face.

"Where do you sleep, Martha?" he asked, abruptly.

"Where—where do I sleep?" she echoed, stammeringly.

"Ay, ma'am, *where?*" he repeated, sternly.

"Why—why here, sir, here in this room," she answered, with some confusion.

He fixed his eyes upon her sharply for a few seconds, and then as abruptly said—

"And how does your mistress rest at night, pray?"

"She rests—she rests—why, sir, she rests pretty well, sir; but why do you ask me?"

He continued to regard the old woman with the same steady scrutiny for some seconds; at last she said, with an affronted air, and rather an effort, for she was, whatever the cause might be, very much disconcerted—

"I'm sure I don't know, sir, what you're looking at me that way for; a body 'id think I was took for a thief."

"There—there—never mind," he said, putting down the candle; "no offence, nurse, no offence—go in to your young mistress. Is there—ay, there's pen and ink here—very well—just go in, and I'll call you when I want you."

Accordingly, the old woman, muttering and sniffing, hobbled into the adjoining room, and closed the door, unaccountably, as it seemed, both irritated and alarmed.

Doctor Robertson being left alone, leaned, in deep reflection, for a minute or two upon the mantel-piece; he then glanced round the room, and observing another door in it, he walked over, opened it, and looked out. It commanded a landing-place upon a back staircase.

"Ha!" said he, as he closed the door, and returned to the fireplace, whistling slowly, and with rather a dismal countenance, a few interrupted staves as he went, he sat down, and after a brief pause exclaimed—

"Poor thing!—poor thing!—it must not rest here. Dear me—dear me—how very strange—I must see her again—humph!—perplexing, but—ay, ay—I'll see her again—it *is* much better."

So saying, he called Martha, gave her some general directions about preparing slops, &c., and telling her to attend to these arrangements meanwhile, he once more entered his patient's chamber.

It was fully half-an-hour afterwards, that Dr. Robertson knocked at Sir Arthur Chadleigh's door.

"Poor little thing!" said he, after a few introductory sentences, exchanged at either side, "she is seriously indisposed, feverish, and very nervous, and, I fear, without an immediate prospect of complete recovery. The best thing to be done for her is, to keep her from all excitement and agitation; her hours must be early, and the fewer visitors she sees the better. In short, I have spoken to her very fully; she is now in possession of my opinion, and appears perfectly disposed to follow my directions implicitly, so there is little else to be done for the present, than to permit her to do as she herself shall desire. In the meantime, I will look in from time to time, to see that all goes on well."

"And pray, Doctor Robertson, how soon may we expect her perfect restoration to health," said Sir Arthur, and with a coarse chuckle he added, "for egad, if a girl is to marry at all, it won't do to have her locked up long—there's no time like the present, my dear sir, especially in the case of youth and good looks."

"True, Sir Arthur; very true," said the medical man; "but, in Miss Chadleigh's case, it would not be safe to undertake her recovery within any limited time—she may possibly be well in a few weeks, and possibly not for a year; it is impossible to predict with certainty; it is one of those doubtful cases, which may go on for a very long time, and which, at the same time, may just as possibly take a good or an ill turn within a fortnight."

"It's cursed provoking—the dear child!" ejaculated Sir Arthur, petulantly, as he thought of Lord Dungarret and his twelve thousand a-year—"what do you say to a week or so in the country?"

"Umph! I proposed that; but she did not like it," said Doctor Robertson; "and her disliking it would make the experiment mischievous instead of useful: her nerves are as much affected as her general health; so that we must not contradict her fancies, or irritate her on any account; she must be allowed to choose for herself—except in matters of essential importance; and in those she has good sense enough to defer implicitly to her medical adviser; so I shall look in, from time to time, and see that matters go on properly, and report progress to you accordingly."

With these words he took his leave. As Doctor Robertson was in large and fashionable practice, Miss Chadleigh's illness was soon generally known; some said it was merely a ruse to complete the reduction of Lord Dungarret; others, that she was broken-hearted for love of the faithless Captain Jennings; many pitied her, and some few sincerely lamented her absence.

I recollect, about this time, strolling into the theatre one evening with two or three acquaintances. We took our places in the back of a box, in the next one to which I observed Jennings. One of my party happened to be acquainted with him, and the following conversation passed between them—a conversation which indirectly threw a light upon some of the darkest passages of his subsequent history—

"I say, Jennings, did you hear the news about the Chadleighs?"

"No—what news?" he inquired, quickly.

"Why, young Chadleigh told me, not an hour since, a letter has come from his brother Dick, whom we all thought was killed and cut up in India; but far from it, he is perfectly well, and returning home on leave."

"Good God! how extraordinary!—I really am delighted to hear it!" exclaimed Jennings, growing pale, nevertheless, and looking stunned and alarmed, instead of overjoyed, as his words implied.

"He has quite a tale of wonders to tell about his escapes and all that," continued his informant; and so rattled on for a time, until, the curtain rising, he directed his attention to the stage.

Though Jennings immediately recovered his serenity of countenance, he grew silent, and in a few minutes withdrew from the theatre, leaving, in my mind at least, impressions not very favourable to the strength of his affections or the value of his friendship. I did not then know the positive reasons which he had for dreading his young friend's return.

Time wore on—months passed away—still Doctor Robertson responded, with gloomy uncertainty, to the inquiries with which he was assailed from all sides; and the general impression began to be, that poor Miss Chadleigh's recovery was becoming at least a very doubtful contingency. Such was the posture of affairs, when your humble servant, who pens these pages, was himself involved in an adventure which it is necessary here to detail.

I had left a pleasant party, somewhere about one o'clock at night, and, without having positively transgressed the limits of sobriety, I had taken just wine enough to predispose me to embark in any exciting enterprise which might turn up. I was quite alone; and, as the reader is probably aware, the streets of Dublin were by no means so safe at night-time in the period of which I speak, as they now are; but relying upon the sword, which the fashion of those days made a necessary appendage, and in whose use I was a tolerably accomplished proficient, I rather courted than avoided such adventures as chance might possibly present. And in this spirit, instead of pursuing the open streets, I threaded the narrow alleys and back lanes with a careless sort of swagger, and a pugnacious disposition, the very remembrance of which, even at this time of day, makes me blush for the reckless folly of my youth. The perversity of fortune was, however, in this instance, as in many others, apparent—silence and solitude encountered my advance. I was now just entering, in my devious ramble, a dingy stable-lane, whose entire length was enlivened by but three twinkling oil-lamps, whose dusky radiance scarcely extended a yard around the wooden posts that supported them. This dismal and silent alley ran immediately behind the west-side of St. Stephen's-green; and I observed the figure of a man walking up and down, as it seemed to me, with cautious and suspicious tread. I could perceive nothing of him, however, in the dusky light, except that, as he passed and repassed immediately under one of the lamps, its faint rays fell upon a broad-brimmed hat, and a great-coat, in which the figure was enveloped. My vague suspicions were confirmed, by observing that this man withdrew himself, with cautious haste, as I advanced, and was soon lost to my sight. I was standing, still looking in the direction in which the figure had disappeared, when a little wicket, in one of the gates opening upon the lane, was drawn back close to where I stood, and a suppressed female voice inquired—

"Are you there?"

"Yes," answered I, promptly; now, for the first time, beginning to feel that an adventure was coming, and inclined to bear my part in it to the close, end how it might.

"Where?" repeated the voice.

"Here," I answered, approaching the aperture.

A female, muffled in a cloak and bonnet, was passing through the wicket, and making me a sign to draw nearer, she said, hurriedly,

"Here—take it—and then wait for us where you are."

At the same time she placed a small bundle in my hands, which I received, nothing doubting that I was innocently made a partner in some night robbery, whose true accomplice was the man whom I had seen walking to-and-fro, as I described, and for whom, doubtless, the woman had mistaken me. With a secret satisfaction at the surprise I was about to give the party, I held the parcel fast, and took a few turns, up and down, before the spot where I had received it, awaiting the further progress of the affair.

While thus engaged, I was nearly met, face to face, by the man whom I had at first seen, and who, hearing some noise, doubtless, at the appointed place of rendezvous, had hurried back. On descrying me, however, he instantly retired as before; and I, fearing to interrupt the current of the adventure, forbore in anywise to obstruct his escape. I had walked thus back and forward, bundle in hand, for eight or ten minutes, when the wicket was opened once more, and the woman I had spoken to already, stepped out into the lane, and said—

"Stand back a little bit, an' follow us, and don't for the life of you drop that."

Almost at the same time two other figures came forth, muffled as carefully as the first, and I heard a female voice from within the wicket, pouring forth, as it seemed to me, prayers and blessings, interrupted with sobs. The door was cautiously closed from the inside, and I heard the key slowly and carefully turned in the rusty lock; and as these sounds were audible, the little party began to move forward, while I, in obedience to orders, brought up the rear, carrying the parcel carefully in my arms.

The person in the centre of the three appeared to be feeble, and to advance with pain, and as she did so, leaned heavily upon the others.

Thus we proceeded, until we reached the end of this lane, and turned into another as solitary and ill-lighted. As the party before me passed under the lamp at the corner, one of the women upon whom she in the middle was leaning, exclaimed—

"Give me *them*, my jewel; they are better off where we are going."

And thus saying, she drew off two or three rings that glittered upon the fingers that pressed her arm, and slipped them into her pocket. This done, they relapsed into total silence, and, full of curiosity for the issue, I followed close upon their steps.

We had now walked, though very slowly, for nearly ten minutes, when, in a dark spot, close under a broad gateway, they stopped.

"Thank God, we are so far," said one of the women; "sit down on that, my darling, for a minute;" and so saying, she laid a shawl, which she folded up in the fashion of a cushion, upon the top of one of the short upright stones which protected the corners of the piers; and upon this rude seat, the silent, and, as it seemed, exhausted figure, sank down. The woman who had just accosted me, now beckoned me to her, and taking the bundle from me, said:—

"Now run down there, and bring up a chair from the stand at the second corner."

She indicated the direction with her hand, and I—exerting myself to the full, as much as if I had had a personal stake in the enterprise, in which I thus found myself, through sheer wantonness, actively involved—ran at my utmost speed upon the errand, and quickly returned with the desired conveyance.

Into this, the feeble woman who had been resting as I have described, was hurried, and the chairmen having received directions to follow the two others, and I in turn to follow them, we all trudged onward, for forty minutes and upwards, in absolute silence.

By that time we had penetrated considerably beyond Werburgh-street, and were now entering the Liberties, when turning abruptly into a short, dark, dilapidated street, the women stopped in front of a tall, dingy house, and after inspecting its exterior and interchanging a few words, they signed to the chairmen to set down their conveyance. Some one had probably been watching for its arrival, from one of the many dark windows which overlooked the street, for she who had sate in it was hardly disengaged from the chair, when the hall-door was stealthily opened, and a grimy, suspicious-looking girl, with a wretched candle in one hand, and shading her eyes with the other, peeped out.

"Give me that," said the woman who had spoken to me, and who seemed to have the command of the expedition, at the same time entering, and taking the candle from her, while she drew the door fully open.

"All right?" she added, inquiringly, glancing significantly upwards.

"Ay, everything," rejoined the other, sleepily; at the same time the other two women entered and passed silently on toward the stairs.

"Pay the men, now, and come in yourself," added the same woman, addressing me. I fortunately had about me enough change to satisfy the chairmen, which, as it seemed it was my province to do, and having dismissed them, I followed my conductress into the house, and surrendered the bundle into her hands.

She turned the key in the hall-door, and beckoned me into a dilapidated wainscotted back-room, on the window-sill of which she placed the dipt candle, which faintly lighted this inhospitable apartment, and pointing to the only piece of furniture which garnished its walls, a solitary, clumsy chair, placed there, I suppose, in anticipation of my arrival, she said—

"Wait there, my good man, till I come back by-and-bye, and you know the rest."

As she spoke to me, I for the first time saw her countenance, which was about as ugly and sinister a one as I had ever beheld; very nearly resembling the lineaments usually ascribed in fairy tales, and other such authentic records, to witches of the malignant kind; a yellow skin, hooked nose, a wide mouth, with a few carious fangs, and a marvellous prominence of chin, gave additional effect to a pair of eyes, whose fierce and rat-like vivacity seemed scarcely reconcilable with the evident antiquity of her other features; and though her head was somewhat sunk upon her chest, yet her original wiry activity seemed to have suffered little abatement from years. This woman's countenance, I confess, impressed me most unfavourably with respect to the object of these arrangements; and I could not help entertaining a vague and unpleasant suspicion of meditated foul-play, and impending mischief, as the glance of this ill-favoured hag continued to haunt my fancy long after she had left me to the dreary solitude of the apartment. There was something, perhaps, a little wounding to the self-love of a young man in being thus coolly set down, as I clearly was, for a lackey; but this I must do myself the justice to say, that I was buttoned up in a great coat fashioned more with a view to comfort than to elegance; and provided with a hat which had seen a great deal of rough night-duty.

The interest I felt in the denouement of the adventure, however, prevented my troubling myself much about this; and seating myself, pursuant to the old woman's directions, in the solitary chair, I was left alone to keep watch in this singularly bleak and comfortless apartment.

Insensibly I began to grow sleepy; and, adjusting myself in as easy an attitude as my uncomfortable position would permit, I fell into an uneasy dose, in which the ill-looking hag, who had last left me, was in my sleeping fancy, hovering about me, and offering me share of the rings I had seen her take, on condition of my being accessary to some infernal crime, which she was always on the point of confiding to me, yet, somehow or other, never divulged, when I was startled from my dreams by a piercing cry. For a moment I forgot where I was; the sound was still ringing in my ears, and the candle, the snuff of which out-topped its blaze, afforded but an imperfect and shadowy light. Full of uneasy apprehensions, I walked softly into the hall, and made my way to the foot of the stairs, where I stood, listening breathlessly for the slightest sound of a human voice, but in vain. I thought, indeed, I could distinguish in some remote upper-room the shuffling of feet, but of this I could not, on account of the constant rattling of the old window-frames in the wind, be perfectly certain. After waiting for a considerable time, I was about to abandon my new position, or to return to my post in the parlour, when I once more distinctly heard the same piercing cry of agony which had at first startled me. Without one moment's hesitation, I drew my sword, strode by three-at-a-time up the stairs, the cries continuing as I ascended; and just as I reached the room from which they were issuing, they subsided into a moan, and I heard the tread of steps as before. I rushed directly to the door, sword in hand, and pushing it open, was some paces towards the centre of the chamber before I could arrest my advance. I had good reason to be astounded. A fire was lighted, and several wax-candles were burning in the room, and illuminated abundance of furniture, somewhat dingy to be sure, but still, as it struck me, comfortable and respectable in appearance; there were curtains carefully drawn across the windows, a carpet on the floor, and a large bed, at one side of which stood, the one a little in advance of the other, the two women I had accompanied, now divested of their bonnets and cloaks; at the other, Doctor Robertson; and in the bed itself, flushed, exhausted, and as it seemed to me, well nigh dying—heavens! could I believe it—Miss Chadleigh herself.

I stood for several moments absolutely petrified with amazement; and those upon whose offices I had thus unexpectedly intruded, in so warlike an attitude, returned my look with a gaze of scarcely less astonishment than mine. The poor young lady, who lay quite motionless, with her eyes just closed, appeared, however, wholly unconscious of the intrusion. Before I had recovered sufficiently from the stupefaction of this extraordinary discovery, Doctor Robertson had taken me roughly by the collar, and drew me, or rather pushed me out of the apartment.

In reply to his angry interrogatories, which he had suppressed until I had reached the lobby, I offered the best explanation, namely, the simple truth.

"Robbers, indeed!" he muttered—"more likely to be one of the gang yourself——"

And calling out one of the women, and having exchanged a few words in a whisper with her, I presume touching myself, he appeared satisfied, and told me to get down again as fast as I could, and to beware how I came again where I was not wanted. Sustaining as well as I could the character assigned me, as it were, by common consent, I conducted myself under this rebuke, as a respectful lackey might be supposed to do. I was so much shocked, that on reaching the chamber where I had been directed to wait, I could scarcely collect my thoughts. Only to think of Miss Chadleigh's being reduced to a situation so strange and deplorable!—she whom I had last seen the admired of all beholders—the life and the ornament of the gay and elegant society in which she moved. Merciful heaven! how repulsive, degrading, and melancholy was the contrast. A prey to a thousand conflicting and tumultuous feelings, I leaned upon the old chimney-piece, gazing into the black and empty grate, lost, not in conjecture or surmise, but in mere confusion, amazement, and, I might almost add, consternation.

While thus engaged, I was tapped on the shoulder by the old woman, whose entrance I had not perceived.

" Poor young lady!" said I—"how is she now?"

" Bad enough," said the woman—" don't your hear her?"

" Poor thing! she seems very ill, indeed!" I answered.

" Ay, ay," she repeated, with a smile, for which I could have strangled her, " it's all one, rich or poor, on *that* bed. She's in the hands of God now, an' nothing but Him and patience to look to ——"

" God help her—God help her!" I repeated.

" Och, never a fear of her," said she, snuffing the candle with her bony fingers; and then putting her hand in her pocket, she gave me a note, saying—

" You're to bring that to him the minute the child's born; and mind, you're to tell him—for the foolish creature set her heart on it—that she wrote it the very last minute she could hold a pen, do you mind? and don't go until I come back and tell you whether it's a boy or a girl; though, God knows, I don't see much differ it makes."

With this remark she withdrew, and I, with intense curiosity, approached the candle to read the address of the billet. " Richard Hamilton Jennings, Esq.," was written with a trembling hand upon it, and, fortunately for my incognito, his address in full subscribed. I now began, for the first time, fully to appreciate the extreme awkwardness and embarrassment of the very equivocal position into which my precipitate folly had led me. I had become possessed of a secret, involving the reputations, perhaps the lives of others, and by a coincidence which, however purely accidental and unpremeditated upon my part, I yet could not help perceiving might, at the same time, expose me to the most painful and disreputable surmises and misconstruction. It was, however, too late now to extricate myself, without possibly doing still further mischief; my now withdrawing could effect no possible good; and, on the whole, I judged it best to perform the services committed to the domestic whose place I had so foolishly taken, and then to confide in Doctor Robertson (whose character, as well as his appearance, I perfectly knew, although I had no actual acquaintance with himself), the exact nature of my position in the affair, believing, and as I still think, with reason, that it would be a relief to the parties who had reason to dread being compromised, to learn that their secret accidentally divulged, had, at all events, fallen into the keeping of a gentleman and a man of honour.

I had hardly arrived at this resolution, when I heard the stealthy tread, and the uneasy respiration of the old woman on her return.

" Well, it's all over, an' a quick case it was," she murmured, as she entered. " She may well be thankful, so she may, not to be undher them, like many a poor creature that's bad fur a night and a day, and longer."

" And how is she?" I urged.

" Och, well enough—as well as can be," she answered—"right well. Don't be delaying any longer; an' don't drop the note, for the life of you. Tell him it's a boy, an' a real plentiful boy; and she's getting on elegant."

So saying, she hurried me to the hall-door, and observed in conclusion—

" Don't clap the door, do ye mind? and if you have any message back, don't knock loud—do you hear me?"

It was still profoundly dark, and the streets silent and deserted. It was past three o'clock, probably nearer four, as I knocked at Captain Jennings' lodgings. He had a handsome set of apartments in Kildare-street, and through the blinds of the drawing-room windows I could see the glare of lights, and the shadows of persons in the room. The hall, too, was lighted;

and from the promptitude with which the door was opened, as well as from the talking and laughter audible from the drawing-room, as I followed the servant up the stairs, it was manifest that Captain Jennings was seeing company.

The servant was a novice in his duties, I suppose; for instead of acquainting his master with my arrival, and leaving me to wait in the hall, he ushered me up at once into his presence. Perhaps, indeed, by way of compensation to my self-esteem, the worthy fellow, with more discrimination than those whom I had last encountered, detected something of the gentleman under my assumed lackeyism. In obedience to his directions, therefore, and perhaps with some lurking curiosity to witness the contrasted situation of himself and of his victim, in the self-same hour, I stepped into the room. It was light as day with wax-lights, and the party, which consisted of some eight or ten, were for the most part engaged at cards. They were all talking and laughing with noisy gaiety; and an elegant supper was laid, with a profusion of plate and wine-coolers, at a long side-table. One of the first persons I saw was young Chadleigh, who was just concluding a satirical anecdote as I entered, and the next was Jennings. I saw the latter cast an angry glance at the servant, and instantly resume the smile with which he awaited the point of young Chadleigh's story; but I plainly perceived that in spite of his command of muscle, his face had grown almost deadly pale.

He waved his hand impatiently to us to withdraw, and as I did so, I saw him fill out a glass of wine. In the midst of the buzz and laughter which followed Chadleigh's anecdote, Captain Jennings joined me in the lobby, and as he did so, I heard Chadleigh call after him some quizzing insinuation as to the nature of my message, which, coming from that quarter, and uttered in all the thoughtless levity of gaiety and dissipation, sounded sadly enough in my ear.

"Follow me," said Jennings, drily, and led the way to the parlour. Placing the candle on the chimneypiece, and standing close by the fireplace, he signed to me to shut the door, which I accordingly did; and when, in obedience to another sign, I had approached so near that our conversation could be distinctly carried on in tones little above a whisper, he continued, with manifest tokens of agitation—

"You came—you came from"—and abruptly stopped, looking at me with a pallid countenance, in which was stamped the intensest anxiety.

"I come, sir, with this note and a message," I replied, placing the letter in his hand.

He broke the seal and read the note hurriedly through, but without any change of expression; then looked at me with anxious abstraction for a second or two, and once more read the note through from end to end.

"And the—the patient," he added, fixing his eyes on me again; "you know—I suppose you know who she is?"

"Yes—Miss Chadleigh," I replied, with an effort.

"He knows it all," he muttered, scarce audibly, and looking at me still with the same abstracted and fear-stricken expression. "And how *is* she?" he asked after a pause—"is she safe?"

"She is doing well, sir," I replied; "she is safely over her trial."

"That's well," he said, drawing a long breath, as if relieved, but without exhibiting any corresponding cheer in the expression of his face."

"And the infant," I began.

"Well," said he, quickly, "what of it?"

"Is also doing well," I replied—"a boy, the nurse desired me to tell you—a very fine boy, indeed."

"The nurse!" he repeated, while his face darkened with renewed alarm—"What nurse? Why, my great God! she's not mad enough—surely it can't—she's not *at home?*"

"No, indeed, sir, very far from her home, and not likely to be found either," I replied.

He seemed relieved; again took up the note, but replaced it on the table unread, and turned, and leaned his head on his hands on the chimneypiece, as it seemed, either buried in profound reflection, or wrung by some sudden agony. After a while he turned about, and thrusting his hands into his pockets, stood with his back to the fireplace, and his head sunk forward. The light of the solitary candle upon the mantelpiece above him, deepened with its shadows the furrows of his contracted brow and down-drawn mouth, He looked, I thought, the very picture of comfortless and guilty wretchedness.

I had conceived instinctively, almost from the first moment I beheld him, a certain feeling of dislike toward Captain Jennings, and this predisposition my recent discoveries were, as you may readily suppose, by no means calculated to mitigate or remove. I could not help saying, in a tone which, had he been less agitated at the moment, might very possibly have provoked his anger—

"And may I ask, sir, have you no message of any kind for the unfortunate young lady?"

"Ay, ay, you're right; I forgot—to be sure," he answered, glancing quickly and anxiously around him; and then raising his hand in painful reflection to his face, replied—"You are very right—a message—yes, yes, yes."

As he said this, he mechanically took up the note again, and looking vacantly at it for a few seconds, threw it, as it seemed, unconsciously upon the table. My eyes followed it involuntarily, and as it fell before me (it is, I hope, needless to say, totally without my intending it, and merely in the accidental way in which the eye is often irresistibly fascinated by, and attracted to, exactly the object from which we are most anxious to avert it), I saw, and in some inappreciable fraction of a second, actually read the three first words of the note: they were—"Darling, darling husband." Turning it hastily face downward, I pushed it back again toward Captain Jennings.

"Husband!" unworthy as I believed the man to be, you would scarcely credit me were I to describe the sense of relief and delight with which my heart expanded as that one word met my eye. It seemed as if the voices of a thousand blessed angels were repeating it in melody and gratulations to my ear; in the glance that revealed it to me, I saw a creature rescued from the abyss of the darkest and most irretrievable of earthly ruin, and standing pure and safe in the light of heaven; my heart swelled within me, and tears rose to my eyes.

While those emotions agitated me, Captain Jennings continued lost in thought, and at last he said:—

"Ay, it is better to write;" and tearing off the outer leaf of the note which lay before him, he traced a line or two with his pencil, but checking himself, again paused, crumpled the note he had just commenced, and that he had received, together, applied them to the candle, and dropped them blazing into the grate.

"Say that I will be with her as soon as I can possibly get away," said he; "but where is the house—where is she?" he added, suddenly.

I described by the land-marks with which he was acquainted, exactly the spot where the poor young lady was to be found.

"Then, just say as I told you, that I will be there without one moment's avoidable delay."

Thus speaking, he hastily led the way to the hall-door; for some of his half-tipsy guests were beginning to call for him, and, as it seemed, were about making an exploratory excursion from the drawing-room. Muttering a broken curse upon them all, he opened the door, and I heard him, as I walked down the stone steps, respond in tones of affected gaiety to their clamorous challenge. With the rapid pace which indicates an excited mind, I retraced my steps; the bells were chiming, and the watchmen drowsily calling four o'clock, as I approached the scene of my strange adventure.

"Thank God, at all events," I fervently murmured—"thank God, the poor creature is not disgraced and ruined; a strange, perplexing, and, I fear, a most imprudent affair it unquestionably is; but, after all, what an escape!—how much to be thankful for!"

I had now reached my destination, and was admitted. The young lady, I was told, was doing well; so I delivered my message, and took my place in the parlour as before, resolved to await the departure of Doctor Robertson, who was still up stairs, and to explain, as was my fixed intention, the foolish accident which had involved me in the affair; acquaint him with my name and address, and assure him of my secresy.

I had not waited very long, when I heard him, with creaking steps, slowly descending the stairs, issuing, as he did, some parting directions to the woman who attended him with the candle.

"I shall look in in the evening, after dark," he said; "everything promises fairly,—so that will do; I'll make my own way out; never mind—good morning."

As the worthy man uttered these gruff civilities, I presented myself at the foot of the stairs, and requested a word with him in the parlour. Merely directing me to be brief, and with a prodigious yawn, he accompanied me thither. I then proceeded to lay before him a full statement concerning myself, and the causes of my participation in the business. He was first disposed to be angry; but my own frankness, and perhaps an old acquaintance with my father, an intimate of his youth, disarmed him, and my explanation ended by his shaking me good-naturedly by the hand.

"Egad, I believe I have been in greater fault of the two, young gentleman, in this affair," he said; "for I undertook *my* part with my eyes open; and a troublesome and an awkward part it must e'en prove, at the best. But," he added, in a changed tone, "with all its trouble and awkwardness, I would not have declined it for a thousand pounds; poor little thing; no, no; this was a matter of life or death; the poor child reposed confidence in me, and trusted me with the secret of her situation, under the seal of silence. I could not honourably divulge it; nor could I, with one particle of common humanity, refuse my aid; her life was in the balance; she would have had none attend her but me, and without proper assistance must have died; to have declined that aid, through any consideration of consequences affecting myself, would have been the act of a respectable scoundrel; it would have been to perpetrate a prudential murder."

As he spoke, there came a hurried knocking at the hall-door.

"This must be Captain Jennings," I said.

"Umph! he must not go up suddenly; they must prepare her for the meeting," said he; and, opening the chamber door, he said to the attendant—

"Shew Captain Jennings, if this be he, into this chamber; and as soon as you think the lady sufficiently recovered to see him, you can tell him so."

With this direction, he re-entered the room, and walked up and down once or twice, with rather an inauspicious expression of countenance, while he awaited the appearance of the new visitor; he had not long to wait; the door opened, and Captain Jennings, muffled in a cloak, entered the comfortless apartment.

Doctor Robertson received him with a stiff nod. After a few brief inquiries, rather drily answered, the physician said, in reply to a significant glance which Jennings had directed toward me—

"You need have no apprehension on account of *his* presence, Captain Jennings; whatever you have to say to me, may be said before him; he already knows all that is of moment in this affair, and his honour may be relied on."

"Honour!" repeated Jennings; "so then he's a gentleman, as I suspected."

"Permit me, Captain Jennings," said Doctor Robertson, "to recommend to you, what I conceive honour and common-sense alike indicate, as the proper course to be pursued in this painful affair. I have not had until this moment, it is true, an opportunity of so much as even speaking to you upon this subject, and do not know, even if I had, that I was at liberty to introduce it. I can have now, however, no scruple in fully telling you my mind; and I must say, that the extreme imprudence into which you have led an inexperienced and fondly-attached girl, threatens seriously to compromise her, not only with her own relatives, but in the eyes of the world. You have placed her in a situation calculated, unless it be at once explained, to prejudice her reputation fatally; and I am bound to say, as an old friend of the family, that unless you come forward frankly, and put Sir Arthur in possession of the real state of facts, I shall feel it my duty to do so myself."

"There is no need of any disclosure—at least *immediately*," said the young man, hurriedly. "Everything is arranged. No one but her old attendant has access to her chamber at home, and Sir Arthur and young Chadleigh don't see her once in five weeks. They don't suspect anything, and need not. Is it not clear that an explosion—a scene—just now, would be about the worst thing in the world for her?"

"Very true," said Doctor Robert-contracted brow and down-drawn mouth. He looked, I thought, the very picture of comfortless and guilty wretchedness.

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I had now reached my destination, and was admitted. The young lady, I was told, was doing well; so I delivered my message, and took my place in the parlour as before, resolved to await the departure of Doctor Robertson, who was still up stairs, and to explain, as was my fixed intention, the foolish accident which had involved me in the affair; acquaint him with my name and address, and assure him of my secresy.

I had not waited very long, when I heard him, with creaking steps, slowly descending the stairs, issuing, as he did, some parting directions to the woman who attended him with the candle.

"I shall look in in the evening, after dark," he said; "everything promises fairly,—so that will do; I'll make my own way out; never mind—good morning."

As the worthy man uttered these gruff civilities, I presented myself at the foot of the stairs, and requested a word with him in the parlour. Merely directing me to be brief, and with a prodigious yawn, he accompanied me thither. I then proceeded to lay before him a full statement concerning myself, and the causes of my participation in the business. He was first disposed to be angry; but my own frankness, and perhaps an old acquaintance with my father, an intimate of his youth, disarmed him, and my explanation ended by his shaking me good-naturedly by the hand.

"Egad, I believe I have been in greater fault of the two, young gentleman, in this affair," he said; "for I undertook *my* part with my eyes open; and a troublesome and an awkward part it must e'en prove, at the best. But," he added, in a changed tone, "with all its trouble and awkwardness, I would not have declined it for a thousand pounds; poor little thing; no, no; this was a matter of life or death; the poor child reposed confidence in me, and trusted me with the secret of her situation, under the seal of silence. I could not honourably divulge it; nor could I, with one particle of common humanity, refuse my aid; her life was in the balance; she would have had none attend her but me, and without proper assistance must have died; to have declined that aid, through any consideration of consequences affecting myself, would have been the act of a respectable scoundrel; it would have been to perpetrate a prudential murder."

As he spoke, there came a hurried knocking at the hall-door.

"This must be Captain Jennings," I said.

"Umph! he must not go up suddenly; they must prepare her for the meeting," said he; and, opening the chamber door, he said to the attendant—

"Shew Captain Jennings, if this be he, into this chamber; and as soon as you think the lady sufficiently recovered to see him, you can tell him so."

With this direction, he re-entered the room, and walked up and down once or twice, with rather an inauspicious expression of countenance, while he awaited the appearance of the new visitor; he had not long to wait; the door opened, and Captain Jennings, muffled in a cloak, entered the comfortless apartment.

Doctor Robertson received him with a stiff nod. After a few brief inquiries, rather drily answered, the physician said, in reply to a significant glance which Jennings had directed toward me—

"You need have no apprehension on account of *his* presence, Captain Jennings; whatever you have to say to me, may be said before him; he already knows all that is of moment in this affair, and his honour may be relied on."

"Honour!" repeated Jennings; "so then he's a gentleman, as I suspected."

"Permit me, Captain Jennings," said Doctor Robertson, "to recommend to you, what I conceive honour and common-sense alike indicate, as the proper course to be pursued in this painful affair. I have not had until this moment, it is true, an opportunity of so much as even speaking to you upon this subject, and do not know, even if I had, that I was at liberty to introduce it. I can have now, however, no scruple in fully telling you my mind; and I must say, that the extreme imprudence into which you have led an inexperienced and fondly-attached girl, threatens seriously to compromise her, not only with her own relatives, but in the eyes of the world. You have placed her in a situation calculated, unless it be at once explained, to prejudice her reputation fatally; and I am bound to say, as an old friend of the family, that unless you come forward frankly, and put Sir Arthur in possession of the real state of facts, I shall feel it my duty to do so myself."

"There is no need of any disclosure—at least *immediately*," said the young man, hurriedly. "Everything is arranged. No one but her old attendant has access to her chamber at home, and Sir Arthur and young Chadleigh don't see her once in five weeks. They don't suspect anything, and need not. Is it not clear that an explosion—a scene—just now, would be about the worst thing in the world for her?"

"Very true," said Doctor Robertson, drily; "all very true; but if there be an explosion, there is no need it should reach her ears. No, no, sir. Believe me, the only honourable course now open before you, is that of promptitude and candour. You ought, without the delay of an hour, to acquaint Sir Arthur with the fact of your marriage."

"And who the devil ——" began Jennings, with a look which partook at once of rage and terror. The expression remained fixed for a time, but the sentence died away unfinished; and muttering some incoherent words, he walked, with a sort of half-agitated, half-defiant air, twice or thrice across the floor, and stopping at the empty fireplace, planted his foot upon the bar, and stood looking vacantly into the inhospitable grate, with an aspect as black and cheerless as its own.

"Well, sir," said Doctor Robertson, somewhat sternly, "you will, of course, act as you think proper; but I again advise you to be the first to open this affair to Sir Arthur; for, as I have already told you, he shall otherwise learn it all from myself. I have a very strong opinion about it."

"Of course, of course," said Jennings, petulantly; and continued, in a haughtier tone, perhaps intended to show Doctor Robertson that his further pursuing the subject would be considered impertinent—"By the way, sir, I ought to have thanked you before this for your able professional assistance."

"Sir, I intended no obligation whatever to *you*. My interest is naturally strongly engaged on the poor young lady's account," replied Doctor Robertson, gruffly, as he buttoned up his great-coat to his chin, and then drew on his warm gloves; "for *her* I would, if need were, do a great deal more."

He turned, stiffly and grimly, from the young man, shook me again by the hand, and took his departure.

Almost at the same moment, in obedience to an intimation from the attendant, Captain Jennings proceeded up the stairs, to the chamber where the young lady lay. As he followed the matron up stairs, the wailing of a new-born baby reached his ears. This feeble and plaintive appeal to his paternal sympathies, was probably far from welcome; for he looked as if, but for very shame, he would have cursed the helpless little creature; and now he stood at the chamber-door. Perhaps some touch of better feelings moved him, for his look grew sadder and softened. He entered. Faint, and with eyes half-closed, the fair young mother —her sore trial over—lay in the hushed and darkened room. Weak and exhausted as she was, a faint cry of joy broke from her pale lips; and such a look of ecstasy welcomed his appearance, as must have moved a heart of stone.

"Oh! Richard, Richard — oh! Richard," was all the poor creature could say, as he stooped over the bed and kissed her, with at least a show of fondness; while her feeble arm was clasped round his neck with an agony of delight, as if she had never hoped to have seen him again.

"Oh! Richard—Richard, darling! —it is you—darling, it is you!"

She clung to him, sobbing, and smiling, and softly repeating words of endearment, till, gently disengaging himself, he kissed her again, clasped her hand in his, and pressed it, and wrung it fondly, as he sat by the bedside. Thus silently testifying his affection, he leaned back, so that the curtain interposed between his face and hers. Two or three bitter tears started down his cheeks, and such a look of unutterable anguish darkened his countenance, as might have shadowed the eternal despair of the damned. Thus some minutes passed, while he pressed the feeble hand he held with a feverish grasp.

This interview was prolonged to more than an hour; and at length Jennings, warned by the approach of the dawn, took his departure, in sore disorder and dismay—his heart agitated with a tumult of terrible passions and sensations, his brain burning with a thousand wild and irreconcilable plans and projects—a thoroughly miserable man.

Meanwhile, I had returned to my lodgings, and thrown myself into bed, not to awaken to the remembrance of my last night's strange adventure until late in the day. It is, of course, unnecessary to say, that I felt the intensest curiosity respecting the progress and final *denouement* of this extraordinary affair. The conclusion was not long suspended.

Jennings had returned to his chamber in Kildare-street; but repose for him was out of the question. He had spent hours of agonized uncertainty; but at last his mind was made up, and his resolution taken.

"I have but one course to take—necessity controls me—I have no choice left," he muttered. "What infernal influence could have possessed me!—what accursed witchcraft can have blinded and infatuated me! Great God! what a serious, what a frightful business, it is turning out. Well, I suppose it was my destiny. I wonder if the old fellow had any inkling of my real situation when he forbid me his house? Merciful Heaven! if I had but acted then like a man of common sense; but some accursed delusion was over me. I had got interested and piqued in the pursuit. I did not dream of mischief. I could swear, with my dying breath, I never meant harm, until accident and the devil—and poor, poor Mary herself—put that accursed piece of madness into my head. Curse my folly! It is a desperate, a frightful situation; but self-preservation is, they say, the first law of nature; and were I even to sacrifice myself, I don't see that she would be essentially the better." He consulted his watch, and continued—"My measures must be taken promptly; that meddling, doctor-fellow, will be on the fidgets till he does mischief. I can't be too prompt."

He rang the bell, directed the servant peremptorily to deny him to all visitors, drew the window-blinds, bolted the door, and then, seating himself before his desk, wrote, with painful attention and assiduity, for full two hours, without rising. This task completed, he carefully raised the manuscript, making various erasures and interpolations, and at last, folded carefully, sealed it, and placing it in his waistcoat pocket (in those days a tolerably capacious receptacle), he buttoned his coat across it.

"Will he *do* it?" he muttered, doubtfully; "we'll see—we'll see. In the first place, he may never be called on to say a word, *pro* or *con*; in the second, even if he be, *this* is as easily said as anything else; and, in the third, we will gild the pill pretty thickly."

So saying, he opened a drawer in the desk, and took out a handful of guineas and a bundle of bank notes, the spoils of his last night's successful play.

"Let me see what have I got in bank," he reflected; "I must leave enough for *my* part of the business; it would not do to be money-bound just now. Ay, ay, he may have the three hundred. I think three hundred will be strong enough for him. Poor Mary—poor Mary!"

Having counted out, in notes and guineas, the sum he had named, he rolled them up, and stuffed them into his pocket; then muffling his face in a shawl, and putting on his hat and cloak, he sallied forth upon an expedition, of the last importance to his plans.

* * * * * * *

It was drawing towards evening, upon the same day, when a servant called at my lodgings with a note, and sent up word that he waited for an answer. I did not know the hand, but expecting an invitation, nevertheless, I broke the seal eagerly, and read the following—to a very different purport, as you may perceive:—

"Kildare-street.

"Captain Jennings presents his compliments to Mr. ——, and trusts that he will pardon the liberty which, under very peculiar circumstances, he takes, in venturing to entreat the favour of his (Mr. ——'s) presence for a few moments, upon a matter of the utmost importance, as respects an affair in which he has already evinced an interest. Captain Jennings has an engagement for this evening, but will be at home till seven o'clock; and will esteem it a real obligation if Mr. —— will honour him with a call at any time before that hour."

I instantly wrote a civil answer, complying with his request; and, full of impatience for the result, I prepared to follow the messenger without losing a moment.

My preparations were quickly made, and I was soon in the street, and traversing the intervening space between mine and Captain Jennings' lodgings at a rapid pace. As I turned the corner of Nassau-street, I met my friend ——, a notorious gossip in his day. I perceived, by his at once taking my arm, and turning about with me, that he had a story to tell, and was rather shocked at his opening sentence—

"Well, what do you think of the

affair in Stephen's-green?—of course you have heard it all—about the Chadleighs; a shocking piece of business, upon my life—a devilish fine girl, too—a great pity."

I affected surprise, and asked the particulars.

"Somewhere about twelve o'clock to-day," he said, "old Sir Arthur received an invitation—at least so I'm told, for I have not yet had time to sift the matter myself—an invitation for himself and Miss Chadleigh, they say, to old Lady ——'s, down in what-d'ye-call-it—that place in Kildare, you know; and they say—egad, I can scarce help laughing, though I'm devilish sorry too—they tell me her ladyship mentioned, by way of inducement, that young Lord Dungarret, an admirer, as it was thought, of Miss Chadleigh, was to be there; and this consideration determined the old boy to accept it, come what might, though his daughter had been ailing for a long time. And so he took his crutches, and hobbled up to her room, where he had not been for a month before, to tell her—ha! ha!—his sovereign will and pleasure; but, egad, the old boy had his hobble for nothing, for, rat me, the bird was flown, the cage was empty; the invalid had absconded, the fair lady had fled; how, why, whither, or with whom, remains a profound secret."

"And when did she go?" I asked, anxious to ascertain how far the particulars were known.

"Oh, last night, and it is supposed by the back way," he replied; "it was devilish well managed—a clever girl, sir—a deep scheme."

"Do they suspect the purpose or the companion of her flight?" I inquired.

"The purpose!—poh, poh! that's plain enough; I have not heard yet who was the gallant gay——but I forgot to tell you, by-the-bye, the old fellow—old Sir Arthur—put himself into such a devil of a frenzy, when he found it out, that he got a sort of a fit—a devilish bad fit, I am told. Poor old fellow! he is a deuced deal too purple and bull-necked to stand excitement. I should not be a bit surprised if he's done for—regularly done for. There goes Dr. Robertson's carriage—egad, direct to Stephen's-green, too; I venture an even guinea, he's going straight to shave and blister old Chadleigh. You know he's their family physician—a great oddity, a perfect character. I'm told Lady Chadleigh, poor woman! used to say, whenever —— by the way, it's odd how things run in the blood—there's Miss Chadleigh just taking after her mother, a run-away already."

Here he broke off, for, seeing a friend at the other side of the street, he hastened across to tell the news to a fresh listener, and leaving me opportunity enough, for we had just reached the corner of Kildare-street, and for many reasons, I had no wish that he should see me enter Jennings' lodgings.

What I had just heard, satisfied me that the catastrophe, whatever it might be, was certainly not far distant; and with a degree of anxiety proportioned to the imminence of the event, in which I could not help feeling the profoundest interest, I knocked at the hall-door, and was promptly shewn up stairs, and found myself *vis-a-vis* with Captain Jennings.

I found him in his dressing-gown and slippers. He looked pale and anxious, but had quite recovered his coolness and self-possession by this time.

"I feel that I have taken a great liberty, in giving you so much trouble," he continued, after the usual salutations had been interchanged, and I had taken a chair; "but, with the exception of Doctor Robertson, with whom my acquaintance is just as slight as with you, I have no other gentleman to apply to in this most unhappy affair"—(here he slightly shrugged his shoulders, with an air of chagrin and discontent, which somehow impressed me more than all that had yet passed, with a conviction of that callous selfishness which I believed to be the basis of his character)—"You and Doctor Robertson are alone acquainted with the particulars of this business, and you will, I trust, forgive the preference which makes me, not, perhaps, unnaturally, select you, rather than him, as the depository of the only confidence I have to make."

He said this in his most engaging and conciliatory manner; but, as I bowed in acknowledgment of the preference, I felt my original dislike of him rather increased than abated.

"I offer no defence whatever for

my conduct; God knows I blame myself as severely as anybody else can possibly do," he continued, with a contrite shake of the head; "I ran blindly into extreme temptation, and have compromised, not only myself, but a young lady, whom I would gladly die to extricate from the unfortunate position into which I have unguardedly led her."

Equivocal as had been his agitation that morning, it was, at all events, genuine; but now he had recalled all the artificial graces of his manner. I saw in the polished ease of his remorse, and in the studied melancholy of his compassion, something indescribably repulsive and abominable.

"Without further tasking your patience," he resumed, at the same time taking a paper from his desk, "I have to entreat your consent to become the depository of this paper. It is a piece of evidence which may throw an important light upon this affair; the copy of a document, which I keep in my possession, and which you will, perhaps, oblige me by retaining in yours; the nature of it you will see at a glance, and I have endorsed upon it the name and address of the party whose testimony it is, so that, if need be, there can be no difficulty in applying it properly. All I ask of you is, to guard it equally from destruction, and from the eyes of all others, but yourself; and that, whenever I write to you to that effect, you will kindly hand it to my law-agent in town, whom I will name to you, whenever it becomes necessary to employ one. Will you kindly undertake this commission?"

I could hardly decline an office, as it seemed, so easily performed. I so little liked the applicant himself, however, that a slight, and not very gracious hesitation, preceded my acceptance of its duties. He thanked me, however, profusely; and I had risen for the purpose of taking my departure, when a vehicle of some kind stopped at the hall-door, and a thundering double-knock announced the arrival of a visitor.

"Tell them I'm dressing," said Jennings to the servant, who appeared at the room-door; and, in the next moment, the summons at the hall-door was answered.

"Captain Jennings is dressing for the evening," I heard the servant say, in reply to the inquiry of the footman who had knocked.

This intimation, however, had not the desired effect, for the steps of the carriage were let down with a sharp clang, and, almost at the same moment, I heard a different voice, that, I presumed, of the visitor in person, demand—

"Is your master at home?"

The same answer was repeated, and the applicant for admission replied in a sharp decisive tone—

"Ha! dressing for the evening, very good; then he *is* at home?"

"But, sir, I beg pardon; he positively cannot see anybody at present," urged the man.

"He shall certainly see me," retorted the visitor, in the same tone. "I know the way—don't mind."

From the moment the clatter of the carriage-steps smote my ear, my mind unaccountably misgave me, and a foreboding of impending collision and mischief, filled me with an almost painful suspense. My instinctive apprehensions did not deceive me. The drawing-room door was pushed abruptly open, and young Chadleigh entered the room.

The moment I saw him, I perceived that in his face which warned me of the truth of my vague anticipations. Pale, stern, and collected, he walked slowly a few steps into the room, bowed with an ominous and icy formality to Captain Jennings, and, in a tone so cold and deadly, as I think I never heard before, or since, said—

"Captain Jennings, I presume you apprehend the subject of my visit?"

It was scarcely necessary to put the question. He had advanced to receive Chadleigh with his usual air of frank and easy gaiety, their eyes met, and in the encounter he read the truth—the smile passed away in an instant from his countenance, and was succeeded by a look, to the full as stern and ominous as that which confronted him. The young men felt that a deadly quarrel lay between them, and I think I never saw a more portentous greeting.

"You have not announced it, sir," said Jennings, with cold and measured politeness; "but I have no hesitation in saying, that I *do* suspect the cause of your visit."

"Good, sir!" replied Chadleigh, in the same constrained voice; "I came on behalf of Miss Mary Chadleigh's father, and in my own right, as her brother, to demand of you, in the first place, where that young lady at present is."

"Without meaning to dispute *your* right to put that question," replied Jennings, "I mean to stand upon *mine*, to decline answering it."

"You refuse to answer?" said his visitor, while his countenance darkened.

"I do—most distinctly refuse," repeated he.

"Pray, think better of it, sir," retorted Chadleigh, with a ghastly mimicry of courtesy.

"Mr. Chadleigh," replied Jennings, haughtily, "I recommend you strongly to act as a man of the world in this business. The mischief, whatever it be, is now past cure. If you will only allow events to take their course, scandal may be avoided, and a great deal of unnecessary trouble, exposure, and violence spared. If you will persist in pushing this matter to extremity, do so; upon your head be the consequences."

"Sir," said Chadleigh, "you greatly mistake me, if you fancy that your mean and perfidious conduct, in spiriting away the daughter of a gentleman, who frankly told you that he peremptorily declined the connexion which your conduct seemed to offer—if you fancy that your base and mercenary conduct in inveigling her, a young lady entitled to a fortune, and with most suitable prospects before her, into a marriage with you, a mere adventurer ——"

"Mr. Chadleigh, before you proceed further, let me ask you, *have* you actually made up your mind to push this affair to a public quarrel?" insisted Jennings.

"Yes, sir," retorted Chadleigh, proudly and bitterly. "Mary Chadleigh has selected for herself—embraced her own degradation—married a man whom her father expressly forbid his house, because he suspected him of entertaining the schemes he has but too securely realized. She is now, and henceforward, to Sir Arthur and to me, a stranger; we renounce and disown her; and by ——, she shall not stand between you and the punishment you deserve." He paused; and added emphatically—"I presume you will be at home by eleven o'clock to-night?"

"Certainly, sir," answered Jennings, calmly.

His visitor bowed sternly, and began to withdraw.

"I wish, if you please, to add one word," said Jennings.

"Certainly," said Chadleigh, returning.

Jennings looked down for a moment, in agitated and guilty abstraction—bit his lips, and grew deadly pale, as though inwardly agonized with a mortal struggle.

"I have to request *your* attention, too, Mr. ——," he said, addressing me, and arresting my departure. "It is, unfortunately, due to myself that you should hear what I am about to say."

"Be so good as to say, without further delay, what you desire me to hear," said Chadleigh.

"Yes, sir; you have forced me to it," said Jennings, drawing himself up, and looking with a steady, and singularly evil scowl, full in his visitor's face. "You talked of marriage?"

"Yes, sir," replied Chadleigh.

"Well, sir, as you *will* have it a quarrel between us, it is, unfortunately, due to myself to say, that there is no such thing as marriage in the case."

Jennings spoke these words with a resolute and measured distinctness, which left no room for misapprehension.

"No!—no marriage!" said Chadleigh, after a hideous pause of some seconds, and speaking almost in a whisper, like one half-stunned, while he returned the guilty gaze of his transformed friend with a stare of actual horror.

For my own part, I confess I was scarcely one degree less astounded than Chadleigh, at this utterly unlooked-for declaration.

"Not married—not married! Why, great God, can it—is it credible! You monstrous, measureless villain ——"

The flimsy varnish of affected courtesy was gone, and the hell-born passions it had masked broke forth in an instant, in undisguised and titanic revelation. With one hoarse execration, shrieked rather than spoken, Chadleigh advanced toward Jennings.

"Take care, Chadleigh—take care; I would not harm you," said Jennings, sternly.

"Hold, for God's sake," I cried,

interposing between the two young men. "Mr. Chadleigh, I implore of you—remember, consider; what can come of this?"

"Let me go, sir," cried Chadleigh, hoarsely.

"Mr. Jennings," I cried, still clinging to Chadleigh, for in his furious paroxysm of excitement, I could not tell what dreadful results might possibly attend a physical encounter, "for God's sake, avoid this; you'll have bloodshed else. Mr. Chadleigh, reflect; stay for one moment."

"Let me go, sir; let me go, or by ——, I'll strike you down," cried Chadleigh, straining and struggling to reach the object of his fury.

"Get into your room, Mr. Jennings, unless you wish for murder. Go, for Heaven's sake," I repeated. "I can't prevent it longer. I tell you go—go, in God's name. *Will* you go, or not?"

Jennings' momentary agitation had entirely disappeared with the immediate menace of such an encounter as that which threatened him. His physical courage no one had ever doubted; and the moment *it* was tasked, his intrepid calmness instantly returned. He hesitated for a second; then, with one glance of mingled remorse and disdain at Chadleigh, he turned, and strode sullenly into his chamber, flinging the door close after him. The key was, fortunately, in the outside; and, without giving Chadleigh time to get before me, I sprang to the door, locked it, and, placing the key in my pocket, stood facing the baffled assailant.

"Sir," he said bitterly, "by ——, you shall answer for this."

"When and how you please, Mr. Chadleigh," I replied, sadly. "I have done my duty, and no more, in preventing a murderous fray; and I thank God I have succeeded."

He stood undecided for a few seconds. At last he said—

"Perhaps you were right, sir; and *I* ought to ask *your* pardon. You *were* right, sir, and I was wrong. Pardon me."

I gave him the assurance he required, and he added abruptly—

"This is no place for me. Good night, sir."

So saying, he left the room; and I, from the window, saw him re-enter the carriage, and drive away, ere I returned to turn the key in Jennings' room. I did so, and called him; there was no answer. I pushed the door open a little, and looked in. He had thrown himself into a chair, and was sitting close by a table, his forehead laid upon his arm, and his face concealed—he was sobbing. He started up abruptly, on becoming aware of my presence, and with a violent effort commanded himself.

"Mr. ——," said he, "pray don't leave me, for a few minutes. Mr. ——, you don't know what I am suffering, and what I have suffered. I am about the most miserable and unfortunate mortal you have ever seen or heard of —indeed I am. Sir, you can't understand—I can't explain to you the horrors of my position."

"The poor young lady," I said, coldly, "is certainly impressed with the belief that she is legally married. Dr. Robertson distinctly told me so—nay, he himself believed it."

"Yes, yes, yes," he interrupted, vehemently; "but I can prove it is not so. The paper I have placed in your hand will show you that there has been no such thing. She thinks it—she believes, no doubt, poor creature; but she's wrong—quite wrong."

I was greatly shocked at the sinister eagerness with which Jennings laboured to impress this fact, which, of all others, I thought he ought naturally to be most anxious to conceal for the present, upon my conviction; and I could not forbear saying—

"At all events, you will not fail to make all the reparation now in your power, and ——"

"What reparation?" he asked, vehemently.

"There is but one," I answered, "which you can now offer; and that is, *marriage*."

"You are right, indeed," he answered, sullenly, after a long pause; "it is the only—the *only* reparation for such a wrong."

He sank into a moody and compunctious silence. At last he said, abruptly—

"They talk of generosity, and impulse, and all that, but take my word for it, *prudence* is worth them all. My own utter want of reflection has done it. I have been drawn into a situation in which I am powerless, at least for good; but do me justice, sir;

you *must* do me justice, for, by ——, I designed no wrong; I am not a cold-blooded wretch. I was led away by passion—misguided and betrayed into a position, as I told you, where I am no longer a free agent, and then my conduct is criticised, as if I could do just as I pleased. Is this justice or honesty? I'm railed at like a cold, scheming villain, and damned for not making reparation—I, that never laid a deliberate plot in my life, or hesitated to make atonement where I could. By heavens, sir, I tell you truth. Is this fair dealing—is it candour—is it common toleration?"

I reminded Jennings that I had no right to judge in the matter; and also intimated that I had already staid too long, and so rose to take my departure.

"Well, well, well," he said, with a dreary sort of shrug; "patience, and shuffle the cards—who knows what may turn up—who knows? Though, egad, take it which way you will, it is about as cursed, black a looking business, as ever man was in for. It is hard—hard, by ——. It looks as if they were all in a savage conspiracy to ruin me; and what good, in the devil's name, can come of it—a pack of fools!"

I now took my leave. A feeling of curiosity, and, still more strongly, one of intense interest in the unfortunate young lady, with whose fate he was so disastrously connected, had tempted me, minute after minute, to prolong my visit. It was already nearly dark, and the street-lamps were burning. I had reached the corner of Grafton-street, buried in profound abstraction, when I was suddenly accosted by a familiar voice. It was that of my friend Fitzgerald, a wild fellow, and a pleasant one to boot, and an accomplished adept in all the then important mysteries of the small-sword and pistol, and learned in all the lore of points of honour.

"Can you tell me," said he, after our greeting, and taking me at the same time by the arm, and drawing me with him, "whether Dick Chadleigh has got into a scrape?"

"What kind of a scrape do you mean?" I asked, evasively.

"Why, he called on me when I was out, not half-an-hour ago," he replied, "and left a hurried note, telling me I must go to him without a moment's delay, on my return, about a little business. Now, there is but one kind of business I understand"—here he raised his arm once or twice significantly, as if balancing a pistol—"and I strongly suspect it must be upon *that* he has called me to counsel; all my friends make use of me, you know, on such occasions. Have you heard anything of Chadleigh's being likely to want my services in *that* way—eh?"

I told him I knew that high words had passed between him and Captain Jennings.

"Jennings—ho, ho!" said he, with a serious air—"a cool hand, I fancy. Egad, from the little I've seen of him, I'm inclined to think, if *he* is the man, it will be a matter of flints and powder—egad, it does look like business."

I was not at all sorry to comply with Fitzgerald's suggestion, to the effect that I should await his return in Brown's coffee-house, and end the evening there in his company. My anxiety to learn the issue of the business was such, that I would gladly have done much more to satisfy it. Accordingly, I dropt into that public resort of idleness, while Fitzgerald, having called a coach, rumbled away to his interview with Chadleigh.

"I had sat there for considerably more than an hour, and was beginning to give up all hope of his return, when he entered.

"Well," said he, when we had established ourselves at a table apart from the rest, "I have had a couple of odd—devilish odd conversations—since I saw you. I don't know, indeed, whether I am at liberty to tell you the subject of the quarrel."

I interrupted him by assuring him that I already knew it; and having satisfied him upon this point, he proceeded to detail the particulars, which I shall condense for the benefit of the reader.

He had, it seemed, found Chadleigh still much excited, and quite determined upon a hostile meeting; indeed, so resolute upon the point, that he would not so much as hear of anything to the contrary. His directions were peremptory, and amounted simply to this—that arrangements for a meeting were to be completed without a moment's delay. All details, of course, were left to the direction of his friend; with respect to the quarrel itself, however, he was not invested with any right of diplomacy. Finding Chadleigh thus implacably resolved, Fitzgerald undertook the affair, which for other parties he had so often filled with singular efficiency, and was duly invested with the important functions of a "second" in the affair. Leaving Chadleigh, however, and being still of opinion that, if possible, the matter ought, for every reason, to be quietly adjusted, he resolved, upon his own responsibility, to make one final effort to prevent a catastrophe which, even if unattended by any more tragical consequences, must, at all events, have the effect of irreparably disgracing Miss Chadleigh. His belief was, that there remained one chance, and one only, of saving the unfortunate young lady, and that was, a private marriage with the author of her shame, accomplished without the delay of a single hour, if possible, so that the public might hear of the elopement and the marriage at one and the same time. Filled with this project, Fitzgerald hurried up the stairs of Jennings' lodgings. The servant announced him as he entered the drawing-room. Jennings had altered his purpose, and determined, after what had passed, to remain at home. He was still in his dressing-gown, and, when his visitor entered, was sitting before his open desk, the candles burning beside him, and what seemed like a miniature in his hands. He was looking intently upon it, with no very loving aspect, when Fitzgerald entered; but he hastily thrust it, face downward, among the open letters, which lay in multitudinous confusion in the profundity of the old-fashioned desk, and shutting all up quickly, he locked it fast, and rose to receive him. Fitzgerald observed, also, that some torn papers were burning on the fire, and Jennings glanced quickly towards them, to see that they were actually destroyed.

"I have the honour, Captain Jennings, to wait upon you with a communication from Mr. Chadleigh," said Fitzgerald.

"Pray, sir, take a chair," said Jennings, coldly, and with a formal bow.

Fitzgerald complied, and resumed—

"I need scarcely, I apprehend, detail the reasons which have induced this step. You have already had an interview with my principal, Mr. Chadleigh."

"There is certainly no occasion, sir, to say more. I do perfectly understand the nature of your visit, which I have, indeed, been expecting; and have only to say, as Mr. Chadleigh has pushed matters to extremity, I apprehend your instructions are very brief, and that our present business may be quickly arranged; if you will favour me with your card, my friend shall wait upon you at whatever hour you name."

"To say the truth, Mr. Jennings," replied Fitzgerald, "you are right in supposing that my instructions have been very brief—in a word, they were those of absolute and unconditional hostility; this, however, is a case of such very peculiar delicacy—a case in which forbearance is so eminently important—so imperatively called for by all the circumstances, that I have resolved to take a responsibility upon myself, and endeavour to arrange this matter amicably, if, indeed, it be possible."

Jennings continued to regard him with earnest attention, but did not speak.

"In short, as far as my influence goes, I would guarantee such an adjustment, upon one condition, which you can have no possible objection in submitting to—that you repair the dishonour you have done Miss Chadleigh, by *marrying* her, before her present unhappy position becomes public."

Jennings grew deadly pale, and his features seemed to contract with the intensity of acute suffering, as he gazed for a few seconds upon the speaker, and then, abruptly rising, with a gesture like wringing his hands, he turned towards the fire, and remained standing for a time with his face averted.

"Well, sir," exclaimed Fitzgerald, after a pause of considerable surprise—for he had expected a prompt and grateful acceptance of his proffered interposition—"what do you say—what am I to understand?"

Jennings heaved a dreary sigh, and said, gloomily and desperately enough—

"What you propose is absolutely out of the question—impracticable."

"Then, sir, take the consequences," said Fitzgerald, with irrepressible indignation; "you have, at least, quieted my scruples in acting against you—there is but one way of settling the matter now."

"Just so, sir," said Jennings, who had recovered his haughty coldness; "and, as I must leave details to the discretion of my friend, I have only to ask you at what hour precisely it will be convenient to you to see him?"

Fitzgerald named ten o'clock that night, and placed his card in Jennings' hand.

"Very good, sir," replied the latter, having glanced at it; "I presume that both parties are equally anxious to have this affair concluded with all possible despatch; my friend shall attend at the appointed hour."

With these words they parted.

"I don't know how it is," said Fitzgerald, after he had concluded his narrative, "but this thing has put me quite out of spirits—it is a bad affair, a d—d bad business; and, mark my words, so sure as you sit there, one or other of them will lose his life by it; they are both of them game—game to the back-bone—game every inch, sir; and Chadleigh is in a murderous, black temper, too. Somehow, this is the first business of the sort, I ever had a hand in, that made me mopish; d—n me, but it smells all over of death and winding-sheets."

As the mortal crisis of this strange tragedy approached, my interest in its *denouement* became more and more intense. At my entreaty, Fitzgerald undertook to let me know, so soon as they were completed, the detailed arrangements for the approaching duel. As he had sundry preparations to make, he was obliged to leave me, and I walked home, in dejected solitude, to my lodgings.

I was no sooner alone in my apartment, than I recollected the paper which had been entrusted to my care by Jennings. He had not only omitted to prohibit its perusal in my case, but had actually told me, in so many words, that I was at liberty to read it. There was, therefore, no impediment to the honourable gratification of my curiosity; and, secure from interruption, I proceeded to examine the document.

It purported to be a statement of certain occurrences, in connexion with a clandestine visit made by the deponent, one "Benjamin Cruise, clerk, resident next door to the Cow and Cleaver, in Smithfield, in the city of Dublin;" at the solicitation of Mrs. Martha Keating, at the house of Sir Arthur Chadleigh, in St. Stephen's-green. The narrative was to the effect, that the reverend gentleman in question was applied to, on or about a certain day, nearly a year preceding the date of the document in question, to attend at the back entrance of the said mansion; where, according to arrangement, he waited until about one o'clock, when he was admitted, and conveyed with great precaution up a back-stair, and into a chamber, where was a young lady, as it seemed, in much agitation; and whom, as he was then and there informed by the old woman, his conductress, he believes to have been Miss Mary Chadleigh; by which name, he was afterwards directed to marry her to a certain young gentleman, whom he now knows to be Captain Jennings, and who, shortly after his, Cruise's arrival, joined the party in the said chamber, with like caution; that he, Cruise, had then, at the desire of the party, proceeded to unite Miss Chadleigh and Captain Jennings, according to the ritual of the Church of England; and that a noise in another part of the house having alarmed them, the ceremony was interrupted in the introductory part, and before the giving of the ring; and he and Captain Jennings, were together hurried out from the house the same way; and, that he never before, or since then, saw Miss Mary Chadleigh, and knew not of her having been married by any other clergyman. This statement, which was given with great aggravation of detail, was duly dated, and signed in full, by the reverend gentleman, in those days, a not very creditably-notorious personage.

The perusal of this document impressed me still more unfavourably respecting Jennings. There was something sinister and equivocal about the whole thing. The infamous character of the degraded man who signed it; the industrious detail with which it had been prepared; and, above all, the unaccountable precaution which had suggested the adoption of such a measure, filled me with painful misgivings, to the effect that some gross and horrible delusion had been practised upon poor Miss Chadleigh; and I could not forbear deeply regretting, that I had suffered myself, under conditions of secrecy, to be made the depository of so suspicious a document.

I was pursuing this unsatisfactory train of reflections, when a note was placed in my hand; it was couched in the following terms:—

"Dear ——,
At seven o'clock to-morrow morning, on the Fifteen Acres.
"Yours in haste,
"FITZGERALD."

I spent a restless night, and was up long before dawn. Having completed my toilet, I walked some way into town, in the grey twilight of coming morning; and when I had, as I calculated, consumed the greater part of the necessary interval, I got into a hackney-coach, and drove directly to the place of rendezvous. Availing myself of a screen of bushes, I stopped the carriage, and got out, unobserved from the scene of action. As soon as I obtained a view of the ground, I observed there a coach, and a little group of three persons, who were standing, listlessly, close beside it; two or three gentlemen on horseback—mere spectators, of course, like myself—were also on the ground. I walked as near as I decently could to the group I have mentioned, and saw that Chadleigh and Fitzgerald were two of the number. The latter looked at his watch, and mounted the coach-box, to command a more extended view; shading his eyes with his hand, he looked along the skirting of wood which bounds the place, in the direction of the city, and at last his eye seemed to settle upon a distant object. I followed the direction of his gaze, and saw the top of a carriage moving in the distance.

"Here," I thought, "comes Jennings; which of them is to leave the field unhurt, and which—" I shrank from the inquiry, merely mental as it was, with something like a shudder. "Poor Mary Chadleigh! whichever way it ends, its issue must be, to her, a tragedy."

Fitzgerald had descended from his post of observation, and recognizing me, he walked up, and shook me by the hand. He looked pale and stern.

"They are coming," said he, glancing towards the vehicle which was now rapidly approaching.

"Rather late—are they?" I asked—more from want of something to say than any other cause.

"No, no; a quarter past seven was fixed on, subsequently to my note, last night; we should scarcely have had light earlier," he said.

"The weapons are pistols?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered; "and we may as well begin to make our preparations. Come with me; you'll not be in the way; I won't stand on ceremony when the time comes for you to withdraw and leave Major Gurney and myself to our deliberations."

So saying, he drew me with him to the side of the carriage.

"Take out the case," he said to the man who stood by the carriage-door; not that—those are the instruments; leave it where Dr. —— placed it—the *flat* case—that's right; just keep it in your hand; and when I beckon to you, bring it over to me quickly; there, don't shake it."

We now walked up to Chadleigh, who stood moodily and doggedly, with his surtout buttoned up to the chin; and exchanging, now and then, a brief word or two with his companion—a slim, pale-faced, young surgeon, who was, evidently, but one degree less frightened than if he had been himself a principal. Fitzgerald dropped my arm as he approached, and leaving me at a little distance, observed, consulting his watch—

"Eight minutes before their time."

Chadleigh nodded.

"They have brought advice, too," suggested the little surgeon, timidly; "there is a second carriage."

"There's no need to waste time," said Chadleigh; "we had better walk on a little to meet them."

The steps of the first carriage had, by this time, been let down; and Jennings, followed by a stiff, elderly gentleman, with a red, important face, and a military air, descended upon the turf. After, as it seemed, a few directions to the servants, they began to walk towards us, briskly, followed by an attendant, carrying a pistol-case; and with the carriage, which carried their medical friend, a little in the rear.

My heart swelled within me as those two little groups approached one another, in grim silence, over the smooth sward. Gracious God! what an awful account for eternity was to be closed ere they parted!

On they came, briskly and steadily, through the keen and misty morning air—nearer and nearer—until the interposing space became so limited that each party, as it were, by mutual consent, slackening their pace, came slowly to a halt, at some dozen steps apart, and interchanged, in silence, a stern and formal salutation. Fitzgerald stept forward, and was met about half-way by the grim elderly gentleman whom I have described. After another salutation, as formal, they withdrew a little, and conducted a brief conference, in short, decisive whispers. Meanwhile, those who, either accidentally, or by design, had been spectators of the proceedings, began to gather about the spot on which the combatants were placed.

I had thought, once or twice, that Jennings perceived my presence, and now I was assured of it.

"Mr. ——," he said, in a low, hurried tone, "I have a request to make."

"Pray, state it, sir," I replied, approaching.

"It is just this—should I happen to fall, remain here for a few moments, as I may feel it necessary to make a communication to you of the last importance, not to myself, but to others."

I undertook to comply with this request, and withdrew.

There was not the slightest perceptible tremor, not the least indication of excitement, in his manner, voice, or aspect, excepting that he was, perhaps, a little paler than usual, and his eyes were unusually dilated. With the restlessness of suspense, I walked to the spot where Chadleigh was standing, and, almost at the same moment, Fitzgerald returned.

"What is the distance?" asked Chadleigh.

"Ten paces," rejoined Fitzgerald.

"Too much," said he, gruffly.

"It is the usual thing; you don't want to have us look blood-thirsty," retorted Fitzgerald.

"And for that reason, I'd like to have it settled one way or other at the first shot."

"It will be settled time enough," said the second, and, unlocking the pistol-case, he proceeded to load the weapons; a silence, hardly broken by a whisper, followed, during which the click of ramrods, and the cramming home of wadded bullets were ominously audible.

"Are you ready, Mr. Fitzgerald?" inquired Jennings' second; "if so, we had better place our men at once."

A piece of money was thrown up for choice of ground; Jennings won.

"Luck's so far with us, sir; I hope it may not turn," remarked the veteran, with a ghastly jocularity.

Chadleigh disencumbered himself of his surtout, and the combatants took their ground respectively.

"Gentlemen," said the major, addressing the spectators, "have the goodness to draw back a little; some of you may be hurt, else."

The suggestion was complied with, and a breathless silence followed.

"Are you ready, gentlemen," inquired the major.

Each answered in the affirmative.

After a brief pause the word "fire" was given, each raised his weapon, but Chadleigh only fired. Jennings must have had a narrow escape, for he shook his head, put his hand to his ear, as if a hornet had stung him, then, quickly raising the pistol, he fired into the air, threw the weapon up, and caught it by the muzzle as it descended.

"D—e, sir, that won't do," exclaimed Chadleigh, in a tone of bitter exasperation, "you may throw away your shot, if you will, but I'm cursed if you get out of the business on these terms; it is the act of a poltroon and a scoundrel to sneak out of a quarrel that way; I'll baulk your scheme, for you ——"

"Don't say a word," said Jennings, sternly, interrupting Fitzgerald, who was about to interfere, "I call you all to witness I have stood his fire, and without returning it—that's all; let him take the consequences of his vindictive obstinacy. I'll not stand to be shot at like a target; I've a right to defend myself, and by —— I'll do it."

"Certainly; 'tis very just and sensible; the very point I was going to put," said the major, with a brisk approval, that strongly contrasted with the savage intensity of Jennings' tone.

It was plain that the angry and mortal passions of combat were, in Jennings, at last thoroughly aroused.

I heard him say to Major Gurney, once or twice, impatiently, "make haste," and saw him dart one or two lowering glances at Chadleigh. The preliminaries for a second exchange of shots were completed in a few moments—the signal was given—and both fired so exactly together, that, from the report, one would have believed the explosion a single one. Jennings' shot was well directed, though accident defeated its aim; it struck the trigger-guard of Chadleigh's pistol, which was nearly forced from his hand by the shock, and glancing off, the ball buried itself in the sod. Jennings, on the other hand, stood immovable, while one might slowly count three, then staggered a little, dropped his pistol, and fell suddenly to the ground. Chadleigh walked forward a few hesitating steps, checked himself, and, in an agitated voice, said to the surgeon who had accompanied him—

"You may be wanted here—by —— he's hurt! Fitzgerald, come away—come, I say."

Meanwhile, amid a babel of conflicting and exciting suggestions, the surgeon, ordering the crowd to stand back, had the wounded man raised a little on the carriage cushions, and was proceeding to examine the injury, but Jennings said, faintly—

"Don't—don't—it's all of no use."

He invited me, with a glance and a slight gesture, to approach.

"One word," he said, speaking with great difficulty. I stooped down, to bring my ear as near him as I could. "It's all a lie—all that—the paper—see the man, and tell him I said so—poor Mary—I made him do it, but I could not help it—there's no use in maintaining the cheat any longer—I'm dying. Keep him away," he continued, faintly turning his gaze for a moment on the surgeon, who was approaching, and then on me, "he can do nothing for me—only listen to me—my last word—that paper is—is a lie—we were married—I can—I can scarcely speak—don't—don't—are you going—hold me—oh God!"

I can never forget the look that Jennings fixed on me—the fearful, imploring gaze of his dilated eyes, filled with the wild, deep, awful meaning of death—the strangling effort to speak—the ghastly pallor—and then, the dropping of the jaw—the mouth, through which the breath of life was never more to stir, helplessly agape—the eyes, with the deep earnestness of their awful meaning, fixed for ever—and the stern movelessness of the darkened brow. Was this the gay, vain, reckless Jennings? Was this mute but fearful monitor of death, propped-up before us, indeed the frivolous, light-hearted, sensual man of the world, among whose dreams and calculations the warning shadow of death had never glided?

"By —— he is dead," said one of the by-standers, breaking the breathless silence that had followed.

The surgeon kneeled down beside him, placed his hand over the dead man's heart, raised his arm, and held his pulse for a moment—then replaced the hand by his side in silence. I remember seeing the grass that he had plucked, dropping from the stiffening fingers.

"Lift the body into the carriage, and drive to Kildare-street," said the physician, addressing the servants.

* * * * * *

Poor Mary Chadleigh was long held in ignorance of this, to her, overwhelming catastrophe. At length, however, it could be no longer concealed; and the revelation was followed by a brain-fever, which first threatened her life, and then her reason. She recovered, however, with a mind unimpaired, although with a shattered constitution. With her younger brother and her child, the youthful widow found an asylum for years in England, until the death of Sir Arthur put her in possession of the fortune which his will could not control.

One circumstance connected with the history of Jennings' fate, however, never reached her ear. I had taken care to procure, though not without considerable difficulty at starting, the fullest evidence of the marriage—and afterwards learned, from the younger brother, whose return had, perhaps, precipitated the catastrophe, a circumstance which accounted for what had, for a time, appeared to me the gratuitous villany of Jennings, in himself denying, and suborning others to deny, a marriage, whose existence was necessary to protect Miss Chadleigh from the agonizing degradation, the appalling ruin, with which she had been so imminently, though unconsciously, threatened. Jennings, it seemed, had actually married a woman of very equivocal rank, and more than equivocal character, in India. There were circumstances, however, which made the validity of this marriage doubtful, and the woman herself had left him, and formed a vicious connexion there; so that he had regarded the marriage as dissolved by mutual consent, and never reckoned upon the remote contingency of her turning up, by any accident. By a fatal coincidence, however, it happened, that, of the few individuals who knew of this connexion, his intimate and confidential friend, Captain Chadleigh, had been one. His supposed death had, however, quieted those alarms, which would have precluded the moral possibility of Jennings' hazarding the audacious step which ended so fatally for himself, and the unexpected and impending return of Chadleigh was the first event which recalled the reckless and unprincipled man to a sense of his actual position. How often is crime unavailing for its meditated purpose, and effective only for the ruin of him who plans it. While Jennings was stoutly denying his marriage with Mary Chadleigh, to avoid the fancied danger of a prosecution, the poor young lady's brother was bringing with him tidings of the death (long previous to his marriage with Miss Chadleigh) of the profligate woman, whose claim upon his hand had driven him to the selfish and desperate expedient of denying his union with the too-confiding creature whom his ardent and impetuous pursuit had won to life-long sorrow. Yet I have lived to see the offspring of this inauspicious marriage, Arthur Chadleigh, a member of parliament, and the sole inheritor of the great Chadleigh estates in Ireland.